

526 of England, Ch. of
AN
A P P E A L

TO THE CANDID AND SENSIBLE MEMBERS

OF THE

ESTABLISHED CHURCH;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

WHICH PASSED BETWEEN FOUR DOCTORS IN

DIVINITY, AND A CURATE, CONCERNING

IRREGULAR PREACHING.

They commanded them not speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.—Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than Men.

Acts iv. 28.—v. 29.

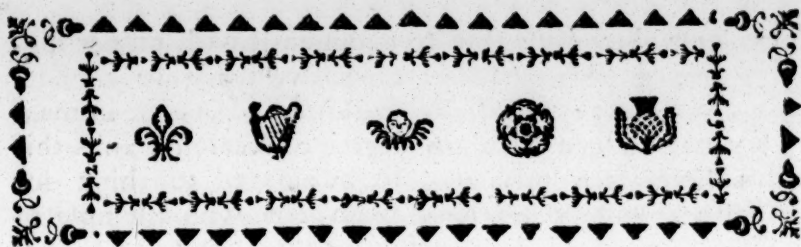
Sapere aude.

Hor.

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A N

A P P E A L, &c.

LIBERTY has been a common topic of Declamation in the ages that are, past ; nor does the subject seem, even at this day, to be entirely exhausted. Men have, however, annexed various Ideas to the term, according as times, circumstances, or things seemed to require. Sometimes they have considered it with reference to the Mind ; sometimes to the Body ; sometimes as implying the Rights or Privileges of particular Nations, Cities, and Towns, or their Inhabitants. At other times they have considered it in a more general view ; as comprehending the great CHARTER, or common Rights of the whole human race. It is to be feared indeed that the term has been often abused by some, who had sinister views ; who therefore used the word *Liberty* only as a *cloak for their wickedness*. Yet we are not to give up the term, because

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some have abused it; but to maintain it with proper dignity, mixed with modesty; especially when we consider it in reference to the Mind, or thinking faculty in man. Every man endued with any degree of Reason claims this as his hereditary privilege, to be allowed to think for himself; therefore he looks upon *him* who attempts to shackle his mind, or deprive him of the Liberty of *private Judgment*, without using convincing arguments to corroborate his opinion, as acting in the same tyrannical manner, as the man who would throw him into a dungeon, and yet would assign no other reason for so doing, but merely "his will and pleasure."

A Curate of the established Church of *Ireland* having a few years ago differed in sentiment, with respect to some things, from four Doctors in Divinity, all beneficed in the same Diocese where he resided, and not being overawed by great names, had the resolution to express with a modest, yet becoming boldness, his sentiments concerning that point, wherein they seemed chiefly to differ from him. A Series of Letters, which passed between the Curate and these Divines upon this occasion, are here submitted to the perusal of the candid and sensible Reader, just in the manner in which they were written. However, lest any of those Gentlemen should take offence, or think themselves ungenerously treated; the Editor has taken care to conceal their Names from the publick eye, distinguishing the Curate and two of those Doctors, who seem to be his warmest opponents, by the three first letters of the Alphabet. The Names of the other two Doctors are distinguished by Asterisks.

Because the majority of the Publick seldom take time to think, at least to think seriously; therefore this case is referred only to the thinking Few. And the Appeal is chiefly made to the professed Members of the established Church; because those Gentlemen, whose Letters are here subjoined, were all members of that Church. Again, it is made only to such as are both *candid* and *sensible*;—because many men may be candid and serious, and yet have not discernment to see the force of an argument;
and

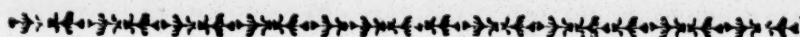
and others, though discerning and sensible, yet may not have candour enough to declare their *real* Sentiments. It is apparent therefore, that they are the minority, yea, the minority of those who are the minority of the Public, to whom this case is referred. Yes, and whoever has the approbation of *these*, the candid, the serious, the sensible, and the thinking Few, need not be concerned though thousands and tens of thousands should pass sentence against him.

It is possible that some Curates, and many other persons, may in some respects be circumstanced as the Curate here alluded to was. They may think differently from their superiors in some things; at the same time that they are circumscribed in their fortunes, or may perhaps be in some sense dependent on the favour of others. Now here they stand in a critical situation; and therefore it may be well to encourage such to express their sentiments with firmness, yet with a proper and becoming deference to the judgment of others. Let them never be intimidated by great Names; yet let them never *use Liberty as a cloak for wickedness*. But when they act from a principle of conscience, and with a single eye, they may rest assured that that God, whom they serve in sincerity, will most undoubtedly support and deliver them.

The points, concerning which the Reader is to determine and give his opinion, will appear from the tenor of the Letters, to which he is now referred. But let him first endeavour to divest himself of Prejudice; and indeed it is more difficult to get rid of old prejudices than many are aware of.

About the middle of September in the year 1777, Mr. A. then Curate of K—, met on the road a Gentleman, who caused him to ride back with him a mile, and expostulated, as a friend, with him concerning (what he called) his irregular conduct.

A few days afterwards Mr. A. took occasion to write to him the following Letter, in which that Gentleman's arguments, and those of some others are taken notice of.



L E T T E R I.

“ To the Rev. Doctor * * * * *

“ Dear Sir.

“ **Y**OUR having been pleased to mention some Reports relative to my conduct of late, as it appeared to me a strong proof of friendship, so it demands my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. Be assured, Sir, I am truly sensible of this token of your kindness, and therefore I shall add it to the number of the many favours for which I shall always hold myself indebted to you.

“ I shall be thankful to any one, that thinks me wrong in any particular, if he will attempt to set me right; and I trust I shall always be open to conviction. Under a *British* Government we should never condemn a man unheard; therefore all I request of my friends is, to suspend their judgment till they hear what I have to say. In order to investigate Truth, we should endeavour, as far as in us lies, to divest ourselves of Prejudice; for, this often forms so thick a cloud about the mind, as not to give admission even to the strongest ray of Truth. We should calmly and candidly examine or *prove all things*, and then *hold fast that which is good*. Above all, we should humbly and perseveringly apply to the *Father of Lights*, to enlighten our understanding, that we may see every thing in its true colour.

“ I am well aware that what I have formerly, or may now advance, may seem to you to favour of “vanity, presumption, or spiritual pride;” but let me request that you will consider, not who it is that writes, but what it is that
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that is written. You will allow, I believe, Sir, that from your earliest acquaintance with me, I was rather diffident of myself; yet I was never so humbled as at present. The more a man knows himself, the more will he be humbled; and 'tis God that must give him this humbling view of himself, by giving him to feel the *plague of his own heart*; or in other words, by convincing him of that original infection of Nature which he derives from the fall of *Adam*. The Book†, which I lately put into your hand, sets this matter in a very clear light; which, if read without prejudice, and with a due application to the Fountain of Light, may be a means of opening the eyes of thousands, who imagine themselves to be very clear-sighted in spiritual matters, and are, notwithstanding, involved in the grossest darkness.

“ I am far, very far, Sir, from placing Religion in Speculation; in any externals whatsoever; or even in attending all the means of grace. The Religion I contend for is the religion of the Heart; an inward, vital Principle, which wherever it is, will appear in outward actions, in works of righteousness and true holiness. There is an absolute Necessity of a new Creation of the Heart, a total, universal change of the inward man; and this can be effected by an almighty Power alone. Many, I know, will grant all this, will give their assent to our Liturgy, Collects, Catechism, Articles, and Homilies, where the Necessity of it is so clearly insisted on; and yet, if they meet a man who hath *experienced* this change, and who relates his experience in the most humble manner, they ridicule him, call him “ Enthusiast, fool, or madman.” The truth is, they have not experienced it *themselves*, and therefore they deny the existence of it in others. They are inconsistent with their own Principles. They deny, in private conversation, on the week days, the very words, which they have read in the Church on the Sabbath-day. They are notoriously defective in the practice of religion. They cannot shew forth works of Righteousness,

† Fletcher's Appeal.

ness, properly so called, because they have not experienced this inward change of heart ; and whilst the tree remains *corrupt*, it is impossible it can *bring forth good fruit*. These are they, who, *St. Paul* foretells, should arise in the latter times, *having a form of godliness*, yet *denying the power of it*. Many of these have inconsiderately undertaken to be Teachers, tho' they were not sent ; neither have they any *experimental* knowledge of Justification by faith, which is the very first step or beginning of a Christian life. And as they are ignorant of the nature of *Justification*, so are they likewise of *Sanctification* ; and therefore they often confound the one with the other, or at least confound those Texts of Scripture that relate to them. They seem to have no idea of any Salvation but the participation of happiness and glory hereafter ; therefore to talk of the earnest of our future Inheritance, which is the privilege of all Christians in *this* Life, seems to *them* " presumption, madness and folly." Oh ! how shamefully fallen are numbers of the modern Professors of the Church of *England*, from both the theory and experience of their truly religious Ancestors ! How scandalous for men to subscribe, and give their assent to Articles and Doctrines, and that in the most public and solemn manner, and yet to deny them afterwards ! How amazing that men will subscribe, *first* what they have not read, *secondly*, what they do not understand, and *thirdly* what they do not believe ! and yet that many members of the established Church have done this, would not, I believe, be very difficult to prove. What would *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, and *Latimer*, and many others of our pious Reformers and Divines, who have left their writings behind them as a memorial of what they experienced ;—what would they say, were they to hear, were they to know, that *Britons*, and the Sons of *Britons*, that *Protestants*, formal Protestants have now the effrontery to deny those very doctrines for which they were burned ?

" I grant indeed that we ought not to subscribe or give our assent to any Doctrine, as a matter of faith, which is not clearly deducible from the written Word of God, which ought to be the standard both of faith and practice ;
but,

but, whoever, upon due examination, thinks that the Doctrines contained in the Articles, Liturgy and Homilies of our Church are not founded upon Scripture, ought not to subscribe, or give his Assent to them, merely for the sake of any temporal emolument.

“ You say, Sir, that I am “ associating with men who are Seceders from the Church established.”—This I deny, and call upon any man to prove it. Let the term “ *Association*” be first defined; and then let it be shewn, what is the Church established. If many of the professed Members of our Church have receded from, or are ignorant of her ancient Doctrines and Discipline; that is *their* fault; but I wish to see her restored to the standard of Religion as it stood in the reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, if not to that of more primitive times; and therefore I think whoever is earnestly engaged in the present revival of Religion cannot be too much encouraged. It is the business of us Shepherds to watch over our flocks, and to guard them from the wolves. If then any of those Itinerants, whom we suspect for wolves come in among our People; I think it incumbent upon us as Clergymen to go and examine, frequently examine, hear and converse with them; and if, upon mature examination, we find them doing harm, then to oppose them with all our might; if they are doing good, that is, turning men from sin and wickedness to a life of righteousness, we ought to thank them for assisting us in promoting the same end which we aim at. For *my* part, if each of my Parishioners would exhort and endeavour to persuade his neighbour to cease to do evil, and to lead a new life; I should follow the example of *Moses*, recorded in Num. xi. 26, 27, 28, 29. Many, tho’ they are partly convinced of the good that has been done in these kingdoms for forty or fifty years past, are yet offended at the *manner* in which it hath been done. But if the effect is really good, I care not what means or method is used in producing it. Others, again, will not acknowledge the Truth, merely because it comes from persons whom they look upon as their inferiors; but we ought to embrace and receive Truth in whatever form she comes

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recommended, as well when she is introduced by a Peasant as by a Prince.

“ It is said, “ There are public places appointed for preaching in, and to officiate in *them* is sufficient ” I do not neglect those places at the usual times of assembling ; and it, on every day in the week, I go into each cottage in the parish, and there pray with, exhort, or instruct my Parishioners, by endeavouring to expound some portion of Scripture, according to my poor abilities, am I not to be commended for so doing?—It is said again, “ that this looks too much like parade and outward show.” It may indeed *seem* so to some, for “ all things look yellow to the jaundiced eye ;” but that it is so in *reality*, requires proof. Again, I am told, “ the greater part of the established Clergy do not act so.”—What then, does it therefore follow that I am wrong ? If the majority be wrong, am I to *follow a multitude to do evil* ? “ But this age is become so degenerate,” say others, “ that it is impossible to reclaim it, therefore you may glide down smoothly with the stream as well as others ; for, if you attempt to struggle against it, your labour will be in vain, and you will be laughed at besides.” Though we cannot stop the torrent ; yet is it not the business of every Man, to endeavour to save at least his own Soul ? “ You ought to obey your Ordinary.” I do mean to obey him, and follow his *godly admonitions* as much as in me lies ; but if he forbids me to preach the Gospel, to publish the glad tidings of Salvation, to use private exhortations as well as public, not only to the sick, but to those in health ; in this I dare not obey him ; I must *obey God rather than man*. “ You ought to observe the Canons of our Church.” Tho’ the Canons are only human ordinances, yet I am not conscious of having acted contrary to them. Let any one who hath observed them *all* for one year last past, cast the first stone at *me*. “ Well, though I must own your design is truly laudable, yet my advice is, Act as others do, otherwise you will be deprived of your Curacy ” This indeed is *argumentum ad hominem*, used (*in terrorem*) when all others fail ; and has with many made the scale preponderate, when

when all others served only to make it kick the beam. Whether it will have this effect on me or not, time only will evince. If I have any strength to stand firm in such a trial, it must be imparted to me from a superior Power; for, of myself I can do nothing. My only view is to do all the good I can to my fellow-mortals in *my* day, and this it is incumbent on me to do, whether I am paid for it or not. If any man thinks I am acting wrong, let him shew wherein; but if, after he is convinced to the contrary, he still persecutes me *for righteousness sake*, at his peril be it; I shall not reckon it an uncommon thing even at this day, and that amongst those who call themselves PROTESTANTS.

I am, dear Sir,
your affectionate and obliged humble Servant,

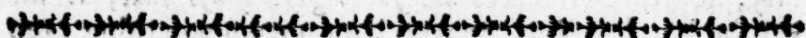
A.ⁿ

Sept. 20th 1777.

Mr. A. received no answer to the foregoing Letter; but when the same Gentleman met him a considerable time afterwards, and said, that it seemed as if he wanted to dispute with him; the Curate replied, that this was very far from his thoughts, and that he was open to conviction, if the Gentleman had any arguments to advance; but he advanced none. In October, 1781, he sent for the Curate, and forbade him to preach in *his* Parish; alledging that the people in a particular part of it, where the Curate had preached for some time, were grown melancholy. Mr. A. offered to reason with him a little, but he would not listen, and declared he would complain that very day to the Bishop; upon which Mr. A. took his leave, telling him in positive terms, that he would preach in that particular place, and also every where, when he found it convenient and necessary so to do. After that time a glorious work of God was carried on in that place, many Souls having been awakened and converted to God in it. Now let the candid reader judge whether that Gentleman acted as a Father in the Church or not? If he thought
Mr.

Mr. A. wrong, should he not have taken a little pains, and offered some arguments to convince him of his error ?

When some of the Parishioners of K—— where Mr. A. was Curate, had built a small Place of Worship, or Chapel of Ease, in the summer of the year 1777, and had applied to the Bishop for his approbation, in order to its being established ; the Curate shortly after received from his Rector the following letter concerning it.



L E T T E R II.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

“ Dear Sir.

“ I saw the Bishop of K—— last Sunday, and he told me that application had been made to him by some of the Parishioners of K—— for another Chapel of ease. He seemed very much surprized that this had not been notified to him by you ; and indeed I wonder much that you did not acquaint me with it.—No one can be more inclined than I shall always be, to gratify my Parishioners, and contribute to their ease ; and particularly to encourage them in the exercise of their religious duties.

“ As to the expediency of erecting this Chapel, or repairing this old Church, (which ever it is) I can be no judge, ’till I know where this Church is to stand, and what provision can be made for the Gentleman who is to officiate in it ; and therefore I beg you will let me know how far the proposed Scite is from S——, from C——, from B——, and B—— ; and what number of Protestants may be in its neighbourhood, who require this additional Church, and who the principal of them are ; and how they propose that the Clergyman shall be paid ; for this I
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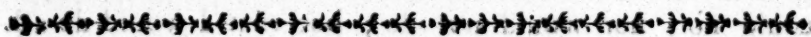
am fully determined on, that Service shall be performed every Sunday at C——: to prevent having only alternate Service there, I pay 50*l.* a year to an Assistant at S——; and therefore shall not consent to the Parishioners in that neighbourhood, being subjected to that inconvenience again. When you acquaint me with these particulars, I shall leave them before the Bishop for his determination; and I must beg of you for the future when any thing new arises in the parish, to give me the earliest intelligence of it,—and by letting me hear from you soon, you will much oblige,

your affectionate humble Servant

B."

Dublin, Oct. 14th, 1777.

To the above Letter the Curate immediately returned the following answer.



LETTER III.

“ To the Rev. Doctor B.

“ Dear Sir.

“ **T**HE Chapel of Ease, which some of the Inhabitants of this Parish are desirous to have established, I looked upon, in the beginning, only as a *temporary* thing; and it arose from the following circumstances.

“ When I first came to this parish, I found the Inhabitants in a most deplorable situation; many of them totally ignorant and uninformed, even with respect to the first Principles of Christianity; so that when I came to visit them on a sick bed, I shuddered at the thought of their plunging

plunging into Eternity in the state they then were in ; nor was it in my power, to instruct them in a short time. Some of them, indeed, have attended the Church of C—— much better of late years than formerly ; but still many living in places very remote from the Church, and so much out of the way as to be inaccessible at some seasons, remain equally ignorant with the most barbarous nations ; and what is worse are more wicked. I pressed these often to come to Church ; but they alledged in excuse the immense distance, and the badness of the roads ; and indeed in many places there are no roads ; for, I have often after riding four or five miles, been obliged to leave my horse, and walk two miles farther through bogs, sloughs, and miry clay. I then told them who were thus situated, who, I think, are near two thirds of those under my care at present, that if they would meet me at some central house, I would give them divine Service on a week day. They met accordingly, and after some time proposed building a small Chapel of Ease, and desired that I should give them alternate service there. This, I told them, I could not, nor would not do ; but that I would do all that was in my power, which was, to give them service in the evening on Sundays, during the Summer, and on a week-day in the Winter ; but that if they insisted upon alternate service on Sundays, they must apply to the Bishop. Some of them were deputed to wait on his Lordship at the late Visitation, but were prevented by some accident ; and as they did not attend at *that* time, I did not think it proper to mention to him the giving alternate service, as that proposal did not originate from *me*. I am informed they have since presented a Petition to the Bishop ; but I don't find that it is, or was their intention, that this intended Chapel should be any additional expence either to the rest of the parishioners, or to the Incumbent Nor was it, or is it my intention to leave the Church of C——. without constant service. I propose indeed giving these Petitioners divine service on Sunday evenings in the Summer, and on a week-day in the Winter, during my residence amongst them ; and this

do, (I appeal to the Searcher of hearts) to discharge my conscience, and that solemn promise which I made at my Ordination. Let my Successor do as he thinks proper; but I think there is no man of feeling that will not pity the situation of these people, were he to know it as well as I do. Indeed it is not possible for any language of mine to express the dreariness of the country in the Winter season; notwithstanding which, and that the parish is, I believe; at least sixteen miles in length, I have walked, *frequently* walked through most parts of it. When I laid an account and a map of this parish before the late Bishop, previous to your becoming Rector, he said, "There ought to be at least four Churches in it;" and indeed, I think the old, Church of K—— ought to be rebuilt.

"The reason why I did not mention this affair to you hitherto was, partly because I looked upon it only as a *temporary* thing, and partly lest I should seem to be the trumpeter of my own praise. I know I shall soon be called to *give an account of my Stewardship*; and were I to do ten times, nay ten thousand times more than I have done, I should still be *an unprofitable Servant*.

"There is no Scite of an old Church at the place where this intended Chapel is to stand; but I am informed there was one of the same kind near that place, in the memory of some persons now living. There is a List returned to me of upwards of sixty families, whose names you may have if you chuse, residing in the neighbourhood of this intended Chapel, some of whom live at the distance of four, five, and six miles from C——, some of them ten or twelve from S——, some four and five from B——. Whether it is expedient to have a Chapel established at the place proposed by the Petitioners or not, I leave to the Bishop and you to determine; but this I know, that something of the kind is absolutely, *indispensibly* necessary; and it will, I am persuaded, appear so to any one who is acquainted with the People and the Place, and who has the Salvation of immortal Souls at heart.

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“ If any thing in future occurs worth mentioning, I shall acquaint you of it, and shall be thankful to you for your instructions.

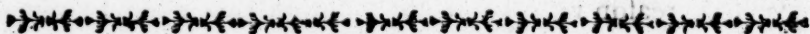
I am, Dear Sir,

Your sincere humble Servant,

A.”

Oct. 17th, 1777.

The Doctor took about six weeks to consider of this important matter, and wrote, in the mean time, once or twice, to other persons in the Country, to enquire about this Chapel of Ease, before he wrote to the Curate the following evasive Epistle.



L E T T E R I V.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

Dublin, Dec. 4th, 1777.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I laid your Letter before the Bishop of K——, who will be very ready to accommodate the Parishioners of K—— with a Chapel of Ease, whenever a Fund is appropriated and secured for keeping it in repair, and for paying the Curate’s Salary, who is to officiate there. When this can be done, he desires to be applied to; But in the mean time thinks it wrong, that publick divine Service should be performed in any place not licensed by the Bishop. I perfectly agree in Sentiments with his Lordship on this occasion, and am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

B.”

To the above the Curate sent the following Reply.

L E T

L E T T E R V.

“ To the Reverend Doctor B.

Dec. 29th, 1777.

“ Dear Sir,

“ **H**AVING lately changed my lodgings, I did not receive your Letter of the fourth inst: so soon as I should have done. — It seems to contain two Parts, one relative to the Parishioners, who have petitioned for a Chapel of Ease; the other respecting myself, and the performing divine Service there. Now, as these people are not very quick in their Intellects, and *their ears are dull of bearing*; if I should read to them that part of your Letter, respecting the Chapel of Ease, they would not understand it; and if I should attempt to expound it, I might perhaps mistake your meaning. Therefore I beg leave to propose a few plain questions, and request you will give a concise, yet explicit Answer to each, in order to elucidate your last Letter.

“ You say—“ The Bishop of K—— will be ready to accommodate the Parishioners of K——, with a Chapel of Ease, whenever a Fund is appropriated and secured for keeping it in repair, and for paying the Curate’s Salary who is to officiate there. When this can be done, he desires to be applied to.”—I ask, will any person apply either to Parliament, or to the Board of First Fruits for a Fund to build a Chapel of Ease in the parish of K——, for the use of the Petitioners? Who is that person; and when will he apply for this Fund?—You say, “ When this can be done,” (that is, I suppose, when this Fund is obtained) “ he desires to be applied to.”—Applied to for what? Is it to request that his Lordship will countenance and establish this intended Chapel? He has *already* received a Petition to that purport: and if I am rightly informed, did at first give his approbation. Is it doubted

whether a Chapel of Ease is necessary at the place proposed by the Petitioners? If so, then a more particular enquiry may be made, and persons examined upon oath. But perhaps it is expected, that the Petitioners should raise the Fund for building this intended Chapel. To this, I think, I may already answer, that they are *willing*, but not *able* so to do. And what they were able to do, they *have* done, namely, to build a *temporary* Chapel; which may serve in the mean time, till a Fund is procured from the Board of First Fruits, or otherwise, for building a more elegant one.

“ With respect to myself, and the performing of divine Service at this Chapel, I would also beg leave to propose a few questions.—You say “ You agree with his Lordship in thinking it wrong, that publick divine Service should be performed in any place not licensed by the Bishop.”—Is it then right that *private* divine Service should be performed there? What is and wherein does the distinction lie between *public* and *private* divine Service? What parts of the Liturgy, Collects, Lessons, &c. &c. are to be used in the one, and omitted in the other? I would also beg leave to ask, where that place is, that is not *already* licensed by the Bishop? I am licensed to assist you in the care of Souls in the parish of K——. Now I cannot take care of those souls without often conversing with them, reading and expounding some portion of Scripture to them, in the best manner I am able, and also praying with them. And I apprehend, that not only the Church-walls whilst I stand within them, but also every Cottage, nay, each foot of ground in the parish of K—— is licensed, whilst I am standing upon it, and that, not only by the Bishop, but by the King’s authority. I also believe it to be my duty to preach the Gospel to every soul within my Curacy, as far as may be; and if they *cannot*, or *will* not come to the Church, then to preach to them wherever I can conveniently meet them. You will please to let me know whether you “ agree with *me* in these sentiments” or not?

“ There is one thing which you seem apprehensive of, the paying an additional Curate’s Salary. Now, to make
your

your mind easy upon that head, I am willing to undertake the giving of constant service both at C—— and this intended Chapel, and that without *any* addition to my Salary. You well know what a weighty and important charge the Care of Souls is: And as you are concerned more than I am in the care of those in this parish, I doubt not but you will fulfil in *fact* what you have said in a former Letter, that is, “to gratify your Parishioners, and contribute to their ease; and particularly to encourage them in the exercise of their religious duties.”

“Perhaps you may think I am too scrupulous, and conscientious in these matters; but I apprehend, where the welfare of immortal Souls is in question, we cannot be too conscientious; and be assured, Sir, I have nothing else in view, but to endeavour to *save my own Soul, and those that bear me.*”

I am, Dear Sir,
with due respect, your affectionate
humble servant,”

A.

The Doctor being put thro’ all his guards, and being, as it seems, unable to answer any part of the Curate’s Letter, vouchsafed to send him only the following lines; at which, no doubt, the reader will be astonished.

L E T.

LETTER VI.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

Dublin, Jan: 17. 1778.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I laid your last Letter before the Bishop, and left it with him at his desire, and suppose he will take the first opportunity of communicating to you and the Parishioners his sentiments about the Chapel of Ease. As to myself, the establishment of it can never affect my interest, as there is as much charged on this Parish already for Curates, as the Law will allow to be charged.

I am, dear Sir,

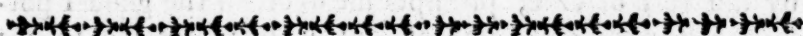
Your obedient humble Servant,

B.”

Here the Correspondence relative to this matter between the Rector and the Curate ended; the Rector taking no farther notice about it; though the Curate continued to preach and read divine Service at the Chapel for near six years afterwards. Perhaps the serious Reader, if he happens to live in the next Century, or in a more enlightened age, will stand astonished, and scarcely credit this relation. He may be ready to enquire; Had this Rector no feeling, no yearning bowels of Compassion over these poor souls committed to his charge? Had he no sense of shame, no regard to his oath or promise? Was he content to live at ease seventy miles distant from the Parish, and never to enquire concerning the spiritual health of those, who contributed to supply *him* with things necessary for the body? Alas! Had he no regard to Justice, Mercy, or Truth? Be astonished, O ye Heavens! And thou, Earth, hide him in thy bosom; cover his Name in the dust!

June

June the 28th, 1781, the Bishop's Visitation was held at —; when two learned Doctors addressed the Curate, and after passing some encomiums on his two printed Sermons, they condemned his practices with respect to preaching out of his own Curacy. Some conversation ensued between each of them and him on this subject. He took occasion to write to them shortly after, and received their answers. Their Letters and his are here subjoined for the Perusal of the Public.



LETTER VII.

“ To the Rev. Doctor * * * *

July 4th, 1781.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ **Y**OU were pleased, on the day of our late Visitation, to declare your Sentiments with regard to those Sermons of mine, which you have seen; saying that “ they were Scriptural, and agreeable to the Doctrines of our Church ” But, as you, at the same time, earnestly requested that I would confine my discourses and exhortations within the limits of my own Curacy; I am ready to pay the most serious attention to what you or any other Father in the Church shall say upon this, or any other topic. Now, so far as I can recollect, tho’ you made this request, you did not assign any reason for it: therefore I beg leave to trouble you further upon this occasion; and do most humbly beseech you, if you see any thing in my practices that is wrong, or worthy of reprehension, that you will mention it in the briefest and most explicit manner. You have already granted, that preaching *every where* is neither illegal, nor contrary to Scripture. If so, then, methinks, it cannot be improper; nay,

may, I believe it is highly useful, and absolutely necessary. I further believe, that every Minister, called of God to speak in his name, may in *some* sense, consider the whole world as his Parish; and though he may labour more in one place than another, yet he may occasionally call sinners to repentance *any where*. As to myself, the case stands thus: I mean, so far as I am able, to follow the Precepts of Christ and his Apostles; and would not follow St. Paul or any other man, farther than I was convinced he followed Christ. My Conscience being enlightened by the word of God, prompts me to do all the good I possibly can in my day; and if any man invites me to his house, and desires me to read or expound *there* a portion of Scripture, or to pray with him and his family or neighbours, if assembled, I dare not refuse, provided I have leisure or opportunity; for, I look upon it as agreeable to the divine Command. Conscience is a sacred thing, which we must attend to, especially when its dictates are agreeable to the written Word of God. However, if you think my Conscience is not rightly informed with respect to this matter, and will take the trouble to set me right, by arguments drawn from *Scripture*, I shall thank you most sincerely, and pay the utmost deference to your Judgment as a man of experience and knowledge in the Scriptures. As this seems to *me* no trivial matter, but rather of the utmost importance; I request the favour of a Line from you on this head, and am,

Dear Sir,

with great regard,

your obedient humble Servant,

A."

To the above Letter, Mr. A. received the following Answer.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

August 1st. 1781.

“ Sir,

“ **W** H E N I took the liberty of speaking to you at our last Visitation, concerning your preaching in Fields, Streets, or Market-houses, out of your own Parish; I did not intend to enter into controversy, nor will I now enter into any. I only offered my private opinion, as a Friend, to you.

“ I remember that you were a decent, regular Scholar in Trinity College *Dublin*, when I was a Fellow there; and I wished, for that reason, that no part of your conduct in this Diocese should give offence, as I was informed your Field-preaching did to our Brethren of the Clergy, and to some reputable Persons among the Laity.

“ It is my own opinion, but I will not defend it, that no Clergyman in these our Days, who is appointed to a particular Flock, has the same Commission to preach the Gospel every where, which the first Apostles of our Saviour had. You have no right to preach in any parish but your own, without the consent of the minister of that Parish. Nay, a Bishop, who is of the highest Order in the Church, must not perform any Episcopal Act, such as conferring of holy Orders, or confirming Catechumens, in the Diocese of another Bishop, without the express consent of that other Bishop.

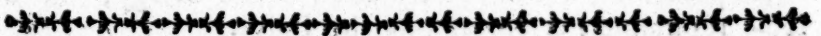
“ I hear, Sir, that you have a wife and children; this consideration also prompts me to speak to you against Field-preaching. I recollect that about four or five years since, my Lord * * * mentioned you in some conversation at * * *, as one whom he wished to see preferred in the Church; and I said something to his Lordship to confirm him in his good Intention. Since he is allied to the
Bishop

Bishop of —, I think he may easily obtain some Benefice for you; but I know neither his sentiments nor those of that Bishop concerning Field-preaching. — And after all, perhaps temporal considerations, respecting yourself, your wife and children, have no weight with you. In that case, to press them further on you, would be vain and ineffectual. I heartily wish you well. I am a friend to Zeal kept within reasonable bounds. I think a greater portion of it is wanted, than we generally meet with. But it is too apt to run riotous, and to flame forth in Enthusiasm and wild Fanaticism. I pray God to preserve you from these dangerous excesses, as well as from Lukewarmness.

I am, Dear Sir,

your very faithful
and humble servant:
* * * *

To this civil Letter, Mr. A. made the following reply.



LETTER IX.

To the Rev. Doctor * * * * *

“ Rev. Sir.

Aug. 6th, 1781.

“ **N**OTHING was further from my thoughts or intention, than controversy, when I wrote my former Letter. And I hope you will look upon the present one only as a token of the respect and gratitude which I think I owe to you, Sir, for your kind advice, and friendly Letter. It is true, I had a desire to hear what might be said on both sides of the question, concerning what is called now “irregular Preaching;” and then to weigh the several arguments in the ballance of Scripture and Reason. Some others of the Clergy have spoken to me upon

upon this subject ; but I am more obliged to *you*, because you have done it in a more friendly manner ; and I will endeavour to follow your advice, so far as I can, without doing violence to my Conscience.

“ I am sorry that any part of my Conduct should give offence either to the Clergy or Laity ; but in any case, where the competition lies between God and man ; then we must *reverence God rather than man*. Now, in my private opinion, the case stands thus in the present instance. And be assured, Sir, there is not a man in this Diocese that had a greater aversion to, or was less qualified for irregular Preaching, than I was, and am still, if I were not afraid of offending the Deity in declining it, whenever there is a necessity for it. Though I laboured for many years with some degree of sincerity and zeal ; yet my labours were not blessed, ’till, after having made the experiment, I sometimes became irregular. It is this that chiefly has weight with me, not because any other man has set me the precedent, either in antient or modern Times.

“ Intemperate or enthusiastic zeal I have hitherto, and I hope always shall industriously avoid. Yet *it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing* ; and such I look upon a desire for the conversion and salvation of souls to be. Indeed I could wish to have those trite terms “ *Enthusiasm* and *Fanaticism* ” well defined, and the middle line that divides them from “ *Lukewarmness* ” nicely ascertained. For, I fear that many, who frequently use them, have no fixed, determinate idea concerning them. (Here I by no means insinuate that Doctor * * * * is one of these.) And I still think, if the line was determined, I should be found on that side that inclines towards *Lukewarmness*.

“ Though “ *temporal considerations* ” have not very great weight with me ; yet I hope I shall never be so devoid of reason as to neglect providing the *necessaries* of life for myself and family. The superfluities I do not seek after ; *having food and rayment, let us therewith be content*. I still retain a grateful sense of the kind manner
in

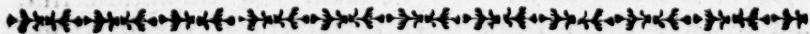
in which you were pleased to mention me to Lord * * * when in conversation with him. But I never had the least expectation of being promoted in the Church either through his means, or that of any other person. And I never directly or indirectly took any steps in order to procure promotion, because it is my private opinion, that it is not right so to do. If any thing comes in a providential way, I believe we may accept of it, when offered. This, I suppose, will, in the opinion of some, savour of Enthusiasm; but, methinks, it must be only those, who do not study or believe the Bible.

"And now, Sir, requesting you will look upon what I have said in this or my former Letter only as the result of my private judgment, not proceeding from any desire for controversy, which I always disliked; and once more returning you my most sincere thanks for your friendly Letter," I remain,

with great regard,
your obliged and very humble Servant,

A."

The other Doctor, who spoke to Mr. A. at the visitation concerning his sermons and practices, was the Rev. Arch-Deacon C—, to whom he wrote as follows :



LETTER X.

June 29th, 1781.

" Dear Sir,

"YOUR having done me the favour yesterday to make your observations concerning two Sermons of mine which have been printed, as also concerning my conduct in other respects, demands an acknowledgment on my side; for that a Gentleman of your station should condescend

condescend to take any notice of the meanest person in this Diocese. Though I have not learned to *give flattering titles to man*, neither do I *accept any man's person*; yet I desire to pay that deference to every Man that is due to him. For a few years past, many and various have been the reports concerning me; nine tenths of which, I will venture to say, have been scandalously false. However, I passed them by in silence, being conscious to myself of acting by one invariable rule, namely, *doing all things with a single eye to the glory of God*. I beg leave to inclose, for your private consideration, a few articles of my Creed, which, with those two Sermons which you have seen, contain the sum of what I believe and preach. If you see any thing in either contrary to *sound Doctrine*; you will do me a kindness if you will take the trouble to mention it.

“ There is one point, wherein you, and, I believe, many others, seem to differ from me in opinion; that is, admitting I adhere to the Doctrines of the Church established; yet it is not expedient to preach them at all times, and in all places. That this is contrary to any of the Canons is not yet clear to me. But should any *human Law* be found to militate against the plain written Word of God, conscience would dictate to me,—“ Do not obey it.”—*Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Mark 16. 15. *Go ye into the high ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.* Matt. xxii. 9. *Go out quickly into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor, the Maimed, the Halt, and the Blind.—Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in.* Luke xiv. 21, 23. These Scriptures, I apprehend, are delivered not only to the Preachers of the Gospel in the apostolic age, but to every Minister ordained or sent of God in every age, to the end of the world. And I believe it is as necessary now to call Sinners to repentance by every means, and by every method, both *in season, and out of season*; (notwithstanding the regular stated places appointed for public worship) as it has been at any time these eighteen hundred years. Now, if the wicked are reclaimed, and Sinners converted unto God; it matters not, me-

D

thinks,

thinks, by what method, in what manner, at what time, or at what place, this effect is wrought, if the effect be *really* accomplished. And that this is the End which we all aim, or *should* aim at, in all our Discourses both in public and private, you will readily agree with me. If so, then let us exert ourselves heartily in so laudable a purpose, having in all things *a single eye to the Glory of God*. You will, I doubt not, pardon the freedom and plainness which I use; for tho' I use such to all men; yet I would not wish to use any *improper* freedom towards any man.

"One thing more I beg leave to mention. I have been represented as one who pretends to something very extraordinary. Now I pretend to no *extraordinary* gifts or graces. My natural abilities are very poor. And, I am persuaded, if any of the Gentlemen Clergy would improve their Talent, they might easily exceed me by many degrees. It is true, for four years past, I have, agreeable to your excellent advice in your Visitation Sermon, applied myself more closely to the study of Divinity, and reading the Scripture than I had done; by which means I have acquired *some* knowledge, tho' comparatively speaking, it is still very deficient.

"As the opportunity we had for conversation was very short, and as you seemed desirous of a farther opportunity, I shall do myself the favour to wait on you at any time or place you require; or if you will condescend to favour me with a Line upon this, or any other subject, directed to me near B——, it shall be punctually attended to by,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient, humble Servant,

A."

Here, before he goes further, the Reader is requested to peruse the above Letter again; and after an impartial consideration thereof, let him candidly say, whether he thinks there is any thing of insolence or disrespect contained in it. This request is made because of the very pompous style of the following one which Mr. A. received in answer to it. The Spirit of both Letters will be easily perceived by every discerning reader.

L E T.



L E T T E R X I.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

July 13th, 1781.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ I Am favour'd with yours, and entirely subscribe to your Doctrine. It is orthodox, and the genuine Spirit of Christianity; and I trust, Sir, it is what influences us all; at least you will readily agree, that no man who did not profess the same could be ordained into the Ministry: Here, then, we are all upon a par: and it is to be hoped, that in our several charges we demean ourselves accordingly. But I wish that a gentleman so eminently orthodox (for you have published) would furnish no occasion of being charged with proceedings subversive of that beautiful order and decorum which distinguishes our Church-Government. Our decent Ceremonies, and Divisions and Subdivisions of Vicar, Rector, Diocesan, Metropolitan, under one supreme Head, who unites the civil with the ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, have no other object but regularity in view, in obedience to that excellent precept, “ Let all things be done decently and in order.” Why then, Sir, will you officiously intrude yourself into the charge of others? Have you too little to engross your attention in your own particular department? I believe, that were your Abilities doubled, you would experience ample range for their exertion within the precincts of your own Curacy: as your late Presentment to the Vicar-general sufficiently demonstrates. But if you have such leisure, yet what motive can you assign for lifting up your voice in your Brother's walk? Is he remiss? Take care how you condemn him. You cannot, without extending

your censure. If he is negligent, your ears will not be the first to be assail'd. So crying a Charge that calls aloud for foreign assistance to preserve the sheep entrusted to his vigilance, must sound like a Trumpet, and will be heard by him, who has Authority to interpose, Power to redress, and Inclination to coincide with Duty. I am as little dispos'd to flatter the Rank, Title, and let me add, the Abilities of any man, as you can be; or to forget what I owe myself, and the Dignity of my Nature; but I hope, at the same time, that whilst there are necessary Distinctions amongst men, I shall ever chearfully conform to the command that enforces a due and manly respect to my superiors. However therefore you may surpass me, yet permit me in the spirit of sincerity, without deviating from the above rule, to blame you for trespassing in the manner you acknowledge and endeavour to defend. Submit the Question to Doctor R——, and you will find you subject yourself to Degradation for officiating in any place unconsecrated; how much more so for an Irruption into the Charge of others, as uncharitable as irregular, and contrary to the practice of all Conformists? If you do dissent from our Church, conceal it no longer under pusillanimous professions, or the stirring Impression of your printed Discourses; but avow it manfully, and forsake us. It tolerates the wildest absurdities of the wildest Sect existing; for it remembers that Legions of Angels are forth coming if their interposition is necessary; and therefore you may preach in the fields and labour to your liking. But if you will continue among us, for God's sake, Sir, be subordinate to those Laws and those Powers you voluntarily submitted to at your Ordination, and when you received that Licence which constitutes you a Curate of K——: for, they are every way calculated for the good of man, and strictly conformable to the word of God, and the practice of the Church from the most primitive age of Christianity.

“ Willingly supposing it your earnest desire to build up, and not destroy; to imitate the pious action of *Shem* and *Japhet*, and not the profligate humour of the abandoned *Ham*, (even if in your power) let me ask, why will you incur the

the danger of multiplying Divisions amongst us, too divided as we are already ; and spiring up the common People to a greater contempt of their legal Teachers than perhaps they are inclined to entertain already, from the malicious suggestions of our antient and indefatigable Enemy ? I reduce the whole matter of our Difference (putting those laws which should regulate us out of the question,) to this short issue. When you enter, uninvited, into the charge of another man, you have paused, as *Cæsar* at the *Rubicon*, and weighed the Business maturely, as it required. There was occasion, you found, upon a fair discussion, for your interference. That could proceed only from the neglect of the proper Pastor. Sir, I affirm, if you cannot convict him clearly of negligence or incapacity, you are *uncharitable* in assembling his Flock without his knowledge and permission ; and *unwarrantable* at all events, while you confess yourself amenable to Church Discipline, yet presume to act without your Licence ; and however others may choose to act, I know my own feelings would take the alarm upon what I should consider a most impudent attack upon all that could render life desirable ; and I should acknowledge the imputation of Negligence as just, if I did not exert myself accordingly. But lay your hand upon your heart, which should harbour a railing accusation against no man ; and after taking a view of the Gentlemen of our Diocese, who have the care of Souls in the several Parishes that compose it, point out the man unworthy of his Charge. When you do, and at the same time can prove to demonstration that you have nothing to do at home, and that you are duly commissioned and can produce your Credentials—then shall you be saluted the Ornament of the establish'd Church in this corner of it ;— then shall your superior attention, ample leisure, and enviable Endowments render you a welcome Help-mate to our Deficiencies, and we will unanimously impel you on with

“ I decus,— i noster — melioribus utere donis. ”

Now, Sir, tho' I highly condemn and reprobate such works of Supererogation as unnecessary at best ; and proceeding

nineteen times in twenty from the high-blown phantasy of Self-sufficiency ; as well as too often from the dangerous, however contemptible designs of hypocrisy ; yet I really think you to be in earnest. Rest assured, that if my opinion of you in every respect was not the very best, I would neither have introduced myself to you, or express'd a desire of a better acquaintance ; or have troubled you with this ingenuous declaration of my Sentiments. Before I put an end to it, permit me to observe that the Texts you point out, were address'd to the first Preachers of the Gospel ; while not only the Disciple but the Master himself was persecuted ; when Kings were not its nursing Fathers, or Queens its nursing Mothers. But the Church was in its Birth. It is now in its glory, and encompass'd so, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Yet if you will consider them as immediate to yourself, and you of course esteem yourself as oblig'd literally to preach the Gospel to every creature,—why do you narrow the sphere of your Activity ; limit yourself to the confined boundaries of this little Diocese, or even to the extensive empire of *Great-Britain*?—*Madagascar, Japan, China*, the Turkish Dominions in *Europe* and *Asia*, with the unpenetrated interior regions of *Africa* are expanded before you ; Difficulties every where present themselves, and court your courage to surmount them ; and martyrdom itself invites you. But if you wish not to be quite so literal, I think you will do better ; for before you can with any degree of propriety transcend those limits you are licens'd to, you are thoroughly to purify and cleanse what they encircle. “ Preach the Gospel, therefore, to every creature within your own charge. Ransack the High-ways, and bid them to the marriage. Search the streets, lanes, and every receptacle of blindness and wretchedness, and compel them to come in.” This is the anxious concern of the Church of which we are Members and Pastors ; but who is sufficient for the undertaking ! It is parcel'd out amongst us who are advanced to the high honour and dignity of Priests. But, tho' dignified and honoured, we are not to be insolent or opinionated. We are to submit

to our Rulers in Church and State. We take an oath before we are authorized to act in our Department to obey them in all their lawful Orders and Directions; it is to preserve unity and avoid confusion. As watchmen we have our different stations; let us be alert, but let us confine ourselves to our respective Posts, that knowing our peculiar offices, we may work with greater efficacy. If the wolf in our absence should destroy our lambs, it will be an useless, however proud, vain-glorious, pharisaical excuse, that we were searching for him in the fold of others. Our Office requires the utmost extent of our Abilities, the whole of our circumspection in our own Cures. It is difficult and dangerous; sufficient to make a thinking man tremble; and we have enough to do in our own circle, if we properly execute our Business without extending our operations into what is confessedly eccentric.

“ Reverend Sir, I bid you heartily farewell;—repeating the invitation you were so kind to accept of, and shall at every your convenience be glad to see you here. But I earnestly request of you, as a Friend and Brother, not to give offence to our reverend Brethren, by a method that must multiply divisions. The inferior Class are Lovers of Novelty; they are also credulous and unsteady; and when they perceive your boundless zeal hurrying you beyond your Commission, they will take your Fancy that they are neglected, for full proof that they *are* neglected; and thus they will receive unfavourable impressions of their perhaps as worthy, but more modest Pastor. What is the natural consequence? You cannot be always with them; if you will not stay at home, it is not into one Parish you will only ramble; and your labours will be so multiplied upon your hands, that it will be impossible for you, like *St. Paul*, to attend to all the Churches; and what then are the poor People to do, who cannot have you always with them; and whom your superior Abilities, more eminent Piety, greater Eloquence, and more salutary Doctrine have rendered discontented, and dissatisfied with their appointed Teachers? Why, Sir, if they cannot be gratified

gratified with you, they will follow the first who adopts your model; and tho' *your* Principles may be sound, and your Doctrine orthodox, yet will you answer for your Successors in this irregular and peripatetic method of spreading your Divinity? Will you take it upon you to affirm and prove that the Flock of Christ is in less danger from wolves in sheep's cloathing by giving their ears and hearts to such Itinerants, than by soberly listening to their legally appointed, and properly educated Teachers? For shame, Sir;—you are a minister of the established Church, and do not therefore either lead or follow those who wish, but wish, thank God, in vain, to undermine and shake her Foundations, and level the fair structure to the ground. For what is it, in the name of common modesty, you mean by a parade of your Creed, and the Papers and Quotations you so often distribute at our Visitations? Why will you subject yourself to imputations? Surely tho' we are not equally ostentatious;—we are as firm in our belief as you can be; and yet you do not perceive any of us making a bustle,—valuing ourselves,—or presuming upon this excellency.—If I say this Diocese is second to none for worthy, learned, pious, and able Preachers, it will never be deemed a vain boast; and tho' we willingly rank you amongst the highest in these great gifts and qualities, yet we cannot permit you to hold yourself out to the world as the first man amongst us, which is what you seem to mean, if you mean any thing at all, by your irregular mode of conducting yourself. But let me here ask you, What it is you would insinuate by these words—
 “ But should any human Law be found to militate against
 “ the plain written Word of God, Conscience would dic-
 “ tate to me, do not obey it?”—Does our Church in her Canons and Constitutions, exact or command us to believe, teach, or practise, any thing derogatory or contradictory to the plain written Word of God; or hath she omitted therein any point that ought to have been inculcated? Our various Adversaries have never been impudent or hardy enough to glance a hint of this horrid kind against us, in all their groundless and perverse Allegations

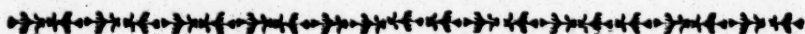
gations for dissenting from us; and as it is a Charge of a monstrous nature, and becoming an open and avowed Adversary, I cannot comprehend the motive that induced you to allude in the most distant manner to so scandalous a supposition. You see I not only pardon (as you term it) the freedom and plainness which you use, but follow your example. Indeed, the nature of our Correspondence, as well as our Characters in life requires the most open dealing. But if my labour to convince you that you have ample employment at home for the fullest exertion of your Talents should prove fruitless; and you continue resolved to persist, and exceed prescription, and to convene and harangue our people,—yet suffer us to assist you to avoid (for the sake of decency) the appearance of irregularity. Allow us to accommodate you with our pulpits; they are erected in a more honourable place, and they are more worthy of a regular-ordained Preacher than you can be complimented with in Fields, Conventicles, and Session-Houses. The Gates of our Churches shall be thrown open for you; our Flocks shall be assembled for you; we will direct them to open their mouths wide and feed with thankfulness on the good food you bring them. You perceive I give you credit for your Orthodoxy; for this offer could not be made to one suspected of strange doctrine. You will do right to accept it. Appearances are against every other method of Address; while in this manner you will have an opportunity of indulging yourself, and we shall proceed hand in hand as common labourers in the vineyard. But then, Sir, when you descend, and our people are left to reflect upon your discourses, it must not offend you, if we ask them in your presence, if there was any thing new in what they heard you utter; any better instructions how to do good and eschew evil; any more prevailing Arguments, from the love or fear of God, to Repentance and Regeneration; or stronger incitements to faith and practice, than those they know to be weekly delivered to them from the same place, by their licenc'd minister? If not, you must excuse us, if in their presence we turn to you, and request of you in
future

future to leave us to ourselves, and stay at home till we stand in need of, and invite your brotherly assistance. You will, then, act in your proper sphere; and I pray to God that our labours in the common Cause of Christianity may be crown'd with success.

“ I am your Friend and Brother,”

C.

To the foregoing Mr. A. made the following Reply.



LETTER XII.

“ To the Rev. Arch-Deacon C—.

July 23d, 1781.

“ Rev Sir,

“ **T**WO days ago I was favoured with your open and very explicit Letter; and am really thankful to you for “ this ingenuous declaration of your Sentiments.” “ Open dealing” is what I like in all men, but especially among Clergymen. And tho’ their Titles and Stations in the Church may be various; yet I agree that “ none of them are to be insolent or opinionated.” I am willing to pay due attention to what *any* man may say, more especially a Dignitary of the Church. And, putting myself in the place of the meanest person in the *British* Dominions, I desire only to be permitted as *Paul* was by *Agrippa*, in the plainest language, *to answer for myself*.

“ To go over minutely each Sentence of your Letter is not at all irksome to *me*; but perhaps it may seem tedious to *you*. I would not indeed willingly intrude upon your patience or leisure; but if I did not take a proper notice of your Letter, it might perhaps be construed as disrespect
in

in me, or that I had nothing to advance. You will therefore permit me to trouble you further upon this occasion, and I shall endeavour to be as concise as I possibly can.

"The whole of your Letter, I believe, might be reduced to one, or at least a few general heads; namely, the method, or manner of "spreading Divinity;" for Orthodoxy is now entirely out of the question. I do "readily agree that no man is admitted into the ministry in our Church, who does not profess" his assent and belief of the Doctrines contained in her Articles, with which you allow mine to coincide. As to the Epithets—"Eminent, Orator, Eloquent, first man in this Diocese, Ornament of the established Church, superior attention, ample leisure, enviable endowments," &c. &c. (whether spoken in irony or not,) I utterly disclaim them; even tho' "I have published" two occasional Sermons. Because I thought "the flock of Christ to be in equal danger" now, as in any other age, from "wolves in sheep's cloathing," was the very reason why I published my first Sermon, in order to guard my people from the ravages of such.

"That my "proceedings are subversive of that order and decorum which distinguishes Church-Government;"—that I act contrary to that excellent rule "let all things be done decently and in order;"—that I "officially intrude myself, or enter uninvited into the charge of others;"—that I am not "subordinate to those laws and powers which constitute me a Curate of K."—that I have deviated from any oath, promise, or declaration, which I made at my Ordination;—that I "lead, or follow" any man, or party of men, who wish or endeavour to undermine the foundations of the established Church, or who dissent from her doctrines; are charges, to which I plead "NOT GUILTY."

"I never go to any Place, to speak or exhort in publick, uninvited, except within my own Curacy. I have many pressing invitations, to which I cannot attend, partly through want of health, and partly want of leisure. Every man, methinks, has liberty to invite whom he pleases to his house, field, &c. &c. and they may there, in conjunction

tion with as many more as they chuse to invite, join in solemn, decent devotion to the Deity. If any Clergyman invites me to his pulpit, and that my leisure and convenience will allow me, I shall thankfully accept of the offer, and will pay him the compliment in turn. And I have not the smallest objection to his asking the Congregation, after I have "descended," their opinion of such Discourse as may have been delivered at that time. I readily agree that there is abundance of work, not only for one of "my abilities," but for twenty more of superior abilities, in the half of one parish; and yet I think I may be allowed to spend *one hour* in a month, or in three or five months, with any person or persons who invite me to their house; provided I spend that time, not in attending Cock-matches, Horse-races, Card-playing, drunken entertainments, and such diabolical practices; but in such a manner as may be profitable to myself and others. Should I assemble my people *every* day in one place for public worship, then the old cant phrase would immediately be used—"you are making the people idle, and hindering them to follow their necessary employments." Therefore I assemble them thus but once, or some times twice a week: But I have visited from house to house, and "ransacked," as you term it, "every receptacle of blindness, and wretchedness" within my Curacy; I mean, of those who are termed *Protestants*, and who were willing to be instructed. And I have used such arguments as I was master of, and repeatedly intreated them to turn from the error of their ways. Some of them, I bless God, have taken the advice, and are now walking humbly before him; but many, too many still remain hardened, and among the rest, those, whom after repeated admonitions without effect, I was obliged at length to present, as the Rubrick or Canon directs. And if any of those continue to transgress the Laws of God; nay, if they perish everlastingly, will any man say that I am in fault? Did *all* who heard the exhortations of our Lord and his Apostles obey them?

I do

"I do not "dissent from the Church established;" but have "an earnest desire to build her up, not destroy." And one of the very best methods to do this, will, I am fully persuaded, upon close and proper inspection, be found to be that one I am taking, however irregular and novel it may appear to some. Let those, who think otherwise, suspend their judgment for a time. I have not made any "pusillanimous professions;" but have openly and "manfully avowed" my sentiments in the face of the Sun.' And from the charge of "hypocrisy," or mental Reservation, you yourself seem to acquit me, saying, that you "really think me to be in earnest, and your opinion of me in every respect is the very best." There is another also, I believe, who will acquit me in this respect, I mean from the charge of hypocrisy, even *He who searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins*, and will bring every *secret Thought* to light. I have not done, because I believe it impossible to do, "works of *supererogation*," for I heartily assent to the XIVth. Article of our Church. And were I able to traverse those "unpenetrated" Countries you mention, and could be instrumental in converting thousands, I should still account myself an *unprofitable servant*.

"I am not "multiplying divisions;" nay, I have been instrumental in bringing some over to our Communion, who were formerly of another persuasion; and these are not only converted from erroneous Doctrines and Principles; but are really *turned from the power of Satan unto God*. This, in St Paul's judgment, is the true Seal for a man's commission to preach the Gospel; and if you will take these as a *Testimonium*, or "Credentials" for my transcending the limits of my present Cure, I can "produce them."

"I am not "spiriting up the common people" to look upon any person or persons with "contempt," much less their Teachers. And tho' they may in *some* sense be "fond of novelty," from which their Superiors are not exempt; yet I have found more real, heart-felt Religion

E

among

among the lower Class, than among those in higher life. I have, it is true, found *some* in a high station, who did really *fear God and keep his Commandments*; but yet, comparatively speaking, they were very few.

"I will not take upon me "to answer" for the actions of any man but myself; neither can I answer for the doctrines of "my successors" in the Pulpit or Curacy any more than for those who may succeed me in the field. All I can do in this case is, to instruct, and endeavour to establish the People in the fundamental Principles of Christianity; and when this is properly done, it will, I apprehend, be the best method to secure them against the depredations of the wolves. And whoever may be in fault, or whatever may be the cause, 'tis truly lamentable to find so many thousands (perhaps I might say millions) not only in "wretched" hovels, and "Receptacles of blindness;" but in magnificent Structures and elegant Buildings, who, with respect to the fundamentals of Christianity, and the plan of Salvation as handed down to us by Christ and his Apostles, are ignorant

"As the wild untaught Indian's brood."

"Suppose I *should* grant you, that the visible Church of Christ is somewhat differently circumstanced *now* from what it was in the apostolic age; yet I believe, you will allow me that the *invisible* Church is pretty nearly the same in all ages; and that the *real* followers of Christ not only have, but do, yea and *shall* suffer persecution, either more or less, so long as Satan has any power. I grant that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail* against the true members of Christ's mystical body, so long as they continue faithful, and *abide in the Vine*; but will any man affirm that all who profess themselves such, are true believers, or members of Christ's invisible Church? Again, tho' as "watchmen fixed in particular stations," it may not be convenient, or in our power to traverse the extensive regions of *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*; yet still the precept holds good, *preach the Gospel to every creature* according to your power; or in other words, do all the good
you

you *possibly* can in your day. Here there is a License, but no prohibition, to act as far as we possibly may. A License and a Prohibition are quite distinct things. The License from Christ, and the License from man, to *preach*, so far coincides; but should man prohibit, where Christ has not, I should be obliged to say, he went contrary to the written Word of God. Again, as Soldiers engaged in a *warfare*, we are not only to act defensively, but offensively, and make incursions into the Enemy's Territories, endeavouring to *pluck* some *brands from the burning*; and should I see some of my Fellow-labourers, or Brother-Soldiers (even within my particular district) rescuing some sheep that was astray, and bringing it back to the *Shepherd of Souls*; I should *rejoice with him*, and give glory to God. Why then will any of my "Reverend Brethren be offended" at *me* for taking *sometimes* an excursion for this good purpose? Certainly I would not be offended at any of *them* for so doing. Whether I succeed or not, it must be allowed the *intention* is good; and therefore I have no reason to be "ashamed" for making the attempt.

"You ask, "What I mean by a parade of my creed?" I answer, I made no "parade or bustle" about the matter; but I sent it to you in a private Letter, for a very plain reason; for your "private consideration;" and also, because I had been maliciously traduced as a Teacher of *strange Doctrines*; that you, Sir, in your station, might have it in your power to do me justice in any company where the affair should be spoken of. The other Paper alluded to was a short extract, which seemed to me so very good, that I handed it to one or two gentlemen, who sat near me; as you or any man would do with any thing curious, and would ask them perhaps whether they had seen it before. You ask, "what it is I would insinuate" by that sentence quoted from my letter?—I intended the very contrary to what you seem to understand. I had said, that I believed, to preach the Doctrines of our Church "at all times and in all places" was not contrary to the Canons of it. However, I said, "I was not clear" in the matter, not having the Canons then by me. The Words of our

XXIst. Article are—"General Councils may err, and sometimes have erred; wherefore things ordained by them have no authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture."—Now, as to *preach the Gospel* every where, seems to *me* agreeable to Scripture, Reason, and common-sense; that human Law or Canon (if such there could be found), which would militate against these, ought not to be complied with. You see, I say,—*"if"* for, I don't grant the position, flattering myself our Church holds or approves none such. Indeed a canon of this kind might have been broached at the council of *Trent*, or in the times of Monkish thralldom; but thanks be to God, we have now our eyes opened, and our necks disengaged from such galling bondage. And should some of our Adversaries still endeavour to fix this "scandal" upon our Church; I would endeavour to save her reputation by saying, that it was foisted in by some one of those alluded to in the 21st Article, "who were not governed by the Spirit and Word of God."

"You seem to think that the "officiating in any place unconsecrated subjects the person to degradation." If that Rule holds good, then I think the greater part of the Clergy in the kingdom may be degraded, if all places are to be looked upon as *unconsecrated*, except Church-walls, and the burying-ground about them: for, do not the Clergy pray, visit the sick, administer the Sacraments, yea, and preach occasionally in private houses? But let me in the Spirit of meekness, and in the name of common Sense, ask, Is not each foot of ground on the face of the habitable globe, even those "unpenetrated" Deserts, where human foot never yet trod, *ALREADY* consecrated by the Deity for praising him, praying to him, and for exhorting Sinners to turn to him, if conveniency serves?

"And now, reverend Sir, that I may be no longer tedious, I *did* "pause," and that for years; before I stepped out of my Curacy to call Sinners to repentance elsewhere. I also proposed the Question to two other learned Divines of this Diocese, who have granted that this, namely,

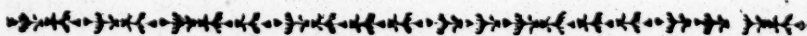
namely, preaching in more places than my present Curacy, is neither illegal nor contrary to Scripture. I now propose it to you in the third place, as a Magistrate and a Clergyman,—Is it contrary to any Law, human or divine? If it is, I beg you to mention the *particular* one, for I really wish to be set right. If it appears that I do not act contrary to Reason, or the Laws which should bind the members of Society; then I may be permitted to proceed according to what some may call “Phanacy;” but which I call CONSCIENCE. I join heartily with you in the prayer with which you conclude your letter, and wishing that *your* labours in the Ministry may be crowned with all possible success, I remain,

Rev. Sir,

with great regard,
your obedient humble Servant,”

A.

On the 28th of August, Mr. A. received the following verbose Epistle by way of reply to his Letter; but whether it contains any arguments, or indeed any thing at all to the purpose, as to the question in dispute, is now submitted to the determination of the candid and sensible Reader.



L E T T E R XIII.

“To the Rev. Mr. A.

August 6th. 1781,

“Rev. Sir,

“I Have carefully perused your second Letter; but you are so vague and indefinite, diffuse, and desultory, that I scarcely know how to follow you, or arrange your Arguments in any logical method, so as to be enabled

to consider them in a regular chain of Disputation. Indeed Sir, your Style and manner are excellently contrived to perplex and mislead ; but as I wish to acquit you of an intention more expressive of a Jesuit than a Minister of the Church of *Ireland*, I will attribute it entirely to the badness of the Cause you have undertaken to defend.

“ You enter the List in the humble guise of “ the meanest Person in the British Dominions, but desire to be permitted as *Paul* was by *Agrippa* to speak for yourself.” Sir, I have known Pride delight as much in the mien and garb of Humility, as Hypocrisy in the assumed Robes of Piety and Innocence ; and I must observe that this allusion to the great *St. Paul* little favours of the Modesty you affect as the meanest Person in our Empire. If you really esteemed yourself as you would infer, we should never have corresponded upon this Subject. You would quietly have remained in your proper Sphere, and contented yourself with a due attention to the Sheep that are entrusted to your care, and whose wants will find ample work for your utmost efforts. But recollect yourself, Sir ; the illustrious Apostle of the Gentiles, and you, are not in the same predicament. He boldly stood forth in the defence of Christianity—every where planting the sacred root—and watering it, at last, with his blood. He was the voice of God—“ Let there be light.” In his Route Error fled away discomfited, and Truth exalted her Throne ; unfurling her heavenly Banner, on which was written with a Sun-beam, “ Glory be to God on high, and in earth, Peace, good will towards Men ! ” The Jewish and the Pagan Priests were alike his Enemies, and they ruled in every Quarter whereinto he conveyed the glad Tidings of the Gospel. For this he was arraigned ; and this it was, in Defence of which he pleaded with such Energy and Power, as to make a Roman Judge tremble on his Tribunal, and a Jewish King almost profess himself a Christian. But you, Sir, are not content with finding this same Gospel thoroughly established in this Kingdom ; you are not satisfied at having an allotted place peculiarly assigned you, to maintain its Truths, encourage its
Friends

Friends, and oppose its Enemies ; but you will counter-act those means our Church-Governors have devised as the most effectual and Apostolical of any for preserving Order, and to avoid confusion ; and deserting your stated Post, will officiously invade the District of your Brother. When justly reprehended in the most friendly Terms for this uncharitable intrusion, you have recourse to the very chief of the Apostles as your Pattern ; and with infinite modesty assimilate your own to the manly and intrepid Figure he exhibited in the finest piece of Eloquence extant upon Earth. No, Sir, there was a primitive Preacher — *John* whose sur-name was *Mark*. I will not contend with you if you think you resemble him sufficiently to authorize a Parallel. This man was, undoubtedly, commissioned to preach the Gospel, and equally bound to obey the Texts you quote, of preaching it every where, as you can be. And yet St. *Paul* would not suffer him to proceed in his company, but absolutely refused his assistance, just as we do yours ; and carried his opposition so far as to part with *Barnabas*, who patronized this *John*, and left them to their own department. It is foreign to the case in point, to reply St. *Paul* had taken some prior just offence at *John* ; for it is sufficient for me to shew that at the first preaching of the Gospel, each Preacher had his Partition. That Gospel is now establish'd ; and as each Preacher has his Partition also, for the purpose of maintaining it ; — it is presumption, — it is arrogance, — it is downright impudence — all of them unpardonable — to invade his Quarter.

“ 2ly. You say “ you readily agree that no man is admitted in to the ministry in our Church who does not profess his Assent and belief of the Doctrines contained in her Articles ; with which, you observe, I allow yours to coincide : you then take notice of the Epithets I gave you, and whether Irony or not, you utterly disclaim them, even tho’ you have published two occasional Sermons.”

“ Sir, I had frequently heard of your Intrusions into the Fold of others, and imagined your Doctrine, like such Practices, might have been contrary to ours ; but having met with your two Sermons, I carefully perused, and found them

them in all points orthodox and sound. It was solely upon this account I introduced myself to you, in hopes that by fair dint of Argument, I might prove to you wherein you were reprehensible, and wean you from a practice unsuitable to the Dignity of your Character. To this benevolent design you must impute the labour I have taken, and the labour I am taking. It is not, therefore, your Doctrine, but your manner I condemn. For while I applaud your Doctrine as thoroughly correspondent to our Articles, I must demand, whether you did not promise to conform as well as testify to believe; and at your Ordination "reverently to obey your Ordinary, &c. &c. &c." And accordingly I arraign you for a breach of these solemn promises from the moment you commenced an Holder-forth in private, and in Session-houses. I accuse you of having at those times departed from the excellent Liturgy of our Church; substituting prayers of your own, or of others as presumptuous Persons, who prefer their own effusions to the almost inspired composition adopted by our Church; and I earnestly exhort you to abandon so derogatory a course, and confine your Abilities within their proper limits, which from your own Confession I intend very soon to demonstrate already too extensive.

"As to the Epithets, they were ironical most certainly. Could you for an instant suppose otherwise, or esteem them in any other sense than what the nature of the subject required? You look upon yourself obliged to preach the Gospel in our Parishes. If it was, in your estimation, preach'd therein already; or if we who are legally by man appointed, were also in your Idea, legally appointed by God—; or were duly qualified in your eyes for this high Commission, there would, certainly, be no manner of occasion for your Interference. We must therefore, some how or other appear deficient or improper to you; and you must prefer yourself greatly before us as every way more competent and capable, when unasked you step into our Divisions. Is not the exclamation natural—"Quid dignum tanto, feret hic Promissor Hiatus;"—must not our
Flocks

Flocks regard you as replenished with better, wholesomer, and more exalted Doctrine than we have the Abilities to charm them with? and as you must be conscious, that to be upon a Level with your Brethren of this Diocese is the highest honour you are capable of attaining; What could be more efficacious towards making you ashamed of an assumed Pre-eminence, than my adorning you with Titles you could not claim? But, Sir, if this oblique method of reducing you to order (which as the gentlest I made use of) is displeasing to you, I will speak in a stile you cannot mistake; and in direct and pointed terms, as the warm Friend and zealous Advocate of as excellent and respectable a Clergy as Christendom can boast, and whom your Practices would insult and misrepresent; I now tell you plainly, that however high you may rate yourself, or your pharisaical Followers may deem you —

“ Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus *istis*
Noster Clerus eget. ”

“ 3dly you say, “ Because you thought the Flock of Christ to be in equal danger now, as in any other age, from wolves in sheep’s cloathing, you published your first Sermon to guard your People from the ravages of such. ”

“ Whoever they may be, who are thus opening their ravenous mouths at the good People of K—, you act the part of a vigilant and faithful Shepherd in putting them upon their guard. These wolves in sheep’s cloathing are impertinent Self-commissioned Teachers, who enter into Houses, and for show make long prayers, misguiding silly women, wresting those very Scriptures which are so descriptive of them in all the meek Appearance of itinerant sanctity. I remember, that under the vagrant Act I banished a number of these miscreants from M—, H—. Reverend Sir, continue to guard your Flock against such designing Hypocrites. I shall make great havock among them if I catch them prowling about K—; and for God’s sake, while you do the same in the mild spirit of Christianity, do not afford one of them for they are cunning and observant) a Plea from your own conduct to twit you in the teeth, and turn you into derision by scoffingly demanding

manding of you, if they have not as much authority to enter your Curacy, assemble, and harangue your People, as you possibly can produce for preaching in the Sessions-House of C——? If we cannot hinder these arrogant Intruders into the ministry, so as entirely to defeat their Purposes, yet a good Shepherd will find means of counteracting, in a great degree, the evil tendency of their Practice. But do not flatter yourself; — he cannot be a good Shepherd, nor a faithful Minister of our Church, who, pro tempore, neglects his own proper Charge, and makes a gap in his Brother's fold, for—God knows who to follow him, — Wolves, Hyenas, Leopards, Tygers, Foxes.

“4thly. You maintain that your proceedings are not subversive of that Order and Decorum which distinguishes Church Government; that you do not act contrary to that excellent Rule.— “Let all things be done decently and in order;” that you do not officiously intrude yourself, or enter uninvited into the Charge of others; that you are subordinate to those laws and Powers which constitute you a Curate of K——; that you have never deviated from any promise which you made at your Ordination; that you do not lead or follow any man, or party of men, who wish or endeavour to undermine the established Church, or who dissent from her Doctrines; and lastly, that you never go to any place to speak or exhort in publick, uninvited, except in your own Curacy.” These, except what regards your own Curacy, are what I charged you with, and to them all—you boldly, and without a single blush, presume to plead not guilty!

“It is impossible to repress an honest indignation at the consummate and matchless effrontery of such a Plea. But I consider that the most atrocious Felon is instructed by his Counsel to make the same defence, tho’ Proofs are flagrant to convict him. What, Sir, have you not in high Idea of your own Importance addressed yourself in publick speech to an assembled multitude composed of the Parishioners of other ministers, and that too, in the very Parishes which they preside in? What call you B—— and C——?

Is this proving yourself amenable to Church-Government; or is it not to the utmost of your power subversive of it? Is this agreeable to the Precept of "letting all things be done decently and in order"? Is this the mode of decency and order enforced by the Rubrick? What Jesuitical evasion have you in reserve when you say, you do not enter uninvited into the Cure of others? or exhort or speak in publick in any place uninvited, except in your own Cure? Are you uninvited in your own Cure? But who can with any degree of propriety invite you to address a Congregation, but the Minister of the Parish it belongs to? Will you condescend to shelter yourself behind the back of the Fanatic or Enthusiast who may choose from a Love of Novelty to beckon you? And, doing this, will you justify yourself as acting to the intention of the License that constitutes you a Curate of K——? Or can you reconcile such conduct to the promise you made at your Ordination "reverently to obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the Charge and Government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourself to their godly Judgments?" Do this, and there can be no longer a difference between us, for I know you are acting contrary to what is every way agreeable to your Rector and Diocesan; and if you will follow their instructions, the Gaoler may keep the key of the Session-House of C——, till the Quarter-Sessions, or Assizes. But while you continue in opposition, you do effectually follow the practices of itinerant Field-Preachers, Jesuits, and all other Enemies of our Church; and of Hypocrites of every denomination; and you certainly tread in their footsteps, altho' I should grant part of your Position, and allow that you do not lead them as their Chief. Nay, Sir, your very sincerity and zealous inclination of doing good, render you the Dupe of their Artifice; for they will exalt and magnify you to insatiation, if they possibly can; in order that, by the practice of an ordained Minister of the established Church, they may justify their own, and direct their machinations more successfully thro' the breach

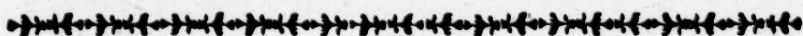
breach you have widened for their reception. Indeed, Sir, if the Vagrant-Act did not, under the Providence of God, interfere for their protection, our poor sheep would almost be entirely devoured by these wolves, who make the very skins they strip them of, subservient to their ruin.

“ The remainder of this Letter you shall have by next Post, as I wish to leave no part of your’s unanswered. I began this the day of the date it bears; but various avocations have so frequently interrupted me that I have been delayed, much against my wishes, acknowledging till now the favour you have done me, and am,

Rev. Sir, with great Sincerity,
Your Friend and Brother,”

[From August 6th to the 22d.]

C.



L E T T E R XIII. continued.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

“ Rev. Sir.

Augst 23d, 1781.

“ **I**N the *fifth* place, you have sheltered yourself, as I expected, behind the back of any man (conscious you were never invited by the Ministers of the Parishes thus invaded) “ for, all have liberty (you say) to invite whom they please to their House, Field, &c. &c. and they may there, in conjunction with as many more as they choose to invite, join in solemn, decent Devotion to the Deity.”

“ O glorious Assertor of the Order and Decency of Church-Government!— O strict Adherer to the Promise made at your Ordination, and the Declaration that you would conform to the Liturgy of the Church of *Ireland*! Here is an ordained Minister of our Church, a licensed Curate of a Parish, in one of the most respectable Dioceses

ceses in *Europe*, setting aside the modes and practices of his Church and Brethren : adopting the plea, the very cant, and irregular proceedings of the meanest and most designing Field-preacher ; and yet gravely, with a face of flint, and boldly affirming he neither leads, or follows them !— If you do not lead, or follow them, you unaccountably mix and blend with them in a manner best known to yourself, and must regulate the precedence at your leisure, or depute a proper Master of the Ceremonies for such Banditti.

6thly. “ You readily agree, that there is abundance of work, not only for one of your abilities, but for twenty more of superior, even in the half of the Parish entrusted to your care ; and yet you think you may be allowed to spend one hour in a month, or three, or five months, with any person or persons, who invite you to their house, provided you spend that time,—not in attending Cock-matches, Horse-races, Card-playing, drunken Entertainments, and such diabolical practices ; but in such a manner as may be profitable to yourself and others.”

“ Here you emphatically acknowledge the difficulty of your own charge, and paint it in such strong and lively colours, that I cannot refrain from expressing my amazement it does not coincide with my endeavours to keep you employed at home : What, Can you really find leisure to extend your plan of operations into the neighbouring Districts, and yet scruple not to declare, that there is occasion for twenty co-adjutors, of abilities superior to your own, to assist you in the management of those, for whom, and for whom alone, you can be deemed responsible either to God or Man ? Why, Sir, you cannot be allowed one hour in ten years, much less in one, three, or five months, for any extraneous ebullitions of your zeal. You must absolutely attend to your own concerns ; you may help us with your prayers, indeed, but we should be unconscionable, if we either demanded, or expected more assistance, circumstanced as you feelingly describe yourself, and surrounded with such a choice of difficulties. For, so far from leisure to attend at Cock-Matches, Horse races,
F Card-

Card-playing, drunken Entertainments, and other diabolical practices, you must be perplexed to find time for the most innocent enjoyments of Life; you must even eat your Vegetables, as the News-papers inform us the King does, standing; or if you scorn to imitate example deduc'd from prophane history, the Jewish Passover is at your service. But trust me, Sir, that if God in his mercy should reclaim your very unfortunate Parishioners, and allow you time for recreation; you would find such relaxations extremely useful towards refitting you for sublimer occupations; nor are they incompatible with our profession; for our blessed Lord himself had nothing morose or gloomy in his manners or deportment; nor in his temper and conversation that savour'd of sourness or of churlishness. Look into his life (the only Pattern by which we can with any certainty regulate our own) and see how he has assumed human nature to the Godhead: so has he taught human creatures how to live godlike lives, and placed heavenly things within the reach of our capacities, not interdicting, at the same time, the innocent enjoyments of life, or withdrawing himself from the harmless customs of the world. Yet mild, humane, compassionate, and inoffensive as he was,—even *his* Purity could not escape the strictures of those men whose whole care was employed, as he retorted on them, upon the outside of the platter. The Antidote to the venom of their lips lay in his spotless Mind; an Antidote his sincere Followers ever shall partake of: Therefore you may spend your vacant hour, (when in such a charge you can meet with one) according to your mind; provided you cautiously abstain, (as you rightly seem determin'd to do) from Cock-matches, Horse-races, Card-playing, drunken Entertainments, and such like diabolical practices; the perils and dangers of which I should not have thought it likely for you to have incurred the hazard of encountering, if along with the idea, you had not suggested the possibility yourself.

“ It is really difficult to follow you thro' the labyrinth you have constructed; where Minotaurs, in the shape and empty form of Cocks, Horses, Cards and Bottles, so dread-
fully

fully assail me, and Repetitions and Tautologies cross the line I would pursue, and render it almost impervious. To forego all metaphor, it is my wish to pay due regard to whatever you advance that is material to the subject; yet I think I should be pardonable if I slighted the methodistical cant you unwarily are led into when you tell me, "the invisible Church is pretty nearly the same in all ages; and that the real Followers of Christ, not only have, but do,—yea and shall suffer persecution either more or less, so long as Satan hath power." While I leave the invisible Church, and all things invisible to you who can see into, and discourse so knowingly about them; I must maintain, that that part of the visible Church established in this kingdom, is not persecuted herself, and allows of no persecution whatsoever. Every absurdity of every Sect she tolerates with Christian Charity, that hopeth and endureth all things; and are not you, yourself a striking and familiar instance of her lenity and patience? Yes, Sir, wherever you exhibit yourself, be it in B——, C——, K——, B——; in Fields, Tabernacles, Session-Houses, or the Banks of *Lough E——*; while, like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, you with the same success compass Land and Water, to make one Profelyte,—you exhibit at the same time, a proof of her moderation and forbearance. I believe, indeed, it is this heavenly temper that galls *most*, if not *all* of our modern Saints; for they endeavour in vain to provoke her by every illiberal abuse malignity is fraught with, in hopes to compel repentment, and commence Martyrs from the consequence.

"Nothing remains for me further to take notice of, but where you say—"Now, as to preach the Gospel every where, seems agreeable to Scripture, Reason, and common sense; that human Law or Canon (if such there could be found) which would militate against these, ought not to be comply'd with."

"To this I answer, that I never would subscribe such a Canon. The time for dissenting is when the Pen is offered for subscription. At my Ordination I carefully read over all that was required of me to sign, being sted-

fastly determined to put my name to nothing but what was in the full conviction of my Conscience, agreeable in the most natural interpretation, to the plain written Word of God : and I was thus careful, because I was resolved with God's Assistance, to adhere to the Truth in all things, and to abide, without wavering, by what I subscribed. But we have no such Canon. I affirmed that every Clergyman who officiates without leave in another's Cure, is severely punishable ; and that preaching in an unconsecrated place, subjects him to degradation. Did I not refer you to Doctor R——? If you had paid due respect to my word, you would not have asked me for an authority it is a shame for you to be ignorant of. When I found you sceptical, I appealed to the first Civilian in the kingdom. Let him decide at the approaching triennial Visitation. I further affirm that it is plain from Scripture, and all ecclesiastical History, that particular places were ever set apart for the worship of God in all ages. The design of our Rulers in the Church by the penalty above-mentioned was to preserve Order and Decency ; but it stands to Reason, Scripture, and Common-sense, that the Bishop of a Diocese can dispense, for the good of souls, with too severe an observance of this statute. For example ; where there happens to be no Church (as in M—— H——) the Ordinary will naturally allow divine Service to be celebrated in the most convenient spot for the Parishioners. It is beneath the dignity of our profession to quibble upon this, or any occasion ; for you can never without torturing the best intentions to the worst purposes, wrest a necessary, an incumbent permission of this kind, into an extravagant licence for setting a Church aside, and assembling our Flocks, much less those of others, in Fields, Conventicles, and Session-Houses. Let me solemnly adjure you to point out the Spot in this Kingdom, wherein the Gospel is not preached in obedience to that divine Command every way incumbent on us to obey ? Is not the king *supreme Head* of the Church ? Does he not make his *Appointments* for the above purpose with *infinite* Wisdom, and consequent success

cells? Has not every Parish its Minister, every Diocese its Bishop, and every Province an Arch-Bishop, to see that this salutary Command is effectually obeyed? Can any human Institution be more perfect? If the men appointed in their different degrees to these high offices should prove unworthy of the charge; what remedy, beyond Deprivation or Degradation, on conviction, can you produce? In *twelve* of our Lord's own choosing, was there not an *Iscariot*? What, then, is it you would have? You seem to me, waywardly, to imagine nothing can be done unless you do it yourself; and yet you confess you have so much upon your hands as effectually to keep in employment twenty more of superior abilities, if you could convene them to assist you. You are involved in a mass of inconsistency, contradiction, and presumption; and had you lived during our Saviour's abode on earth, and been one of the Seventy he sent out to preach the Gospel, you would have ran counter to the practice of the rest, (for they went out two by two, as they were instructed, into the different Quarters that were assigned them) would have followed into one, or all of theirs, and to the best of your endeavours improved upon a plan even of your master's. This you would have done, and have justified it too, with a volume of Texts, and a Ream of Paper; for there is not a Sectary or Visionary throughout the world, who cannot wrest and quote the Scripture to his destruction. Will you deny this inference, and affirm that had you been one of the Seventy, you would have exerted yourself with your associate in the prescribed Department, without intruding into those of the Sixty-eight, who acted by the same Commission, and for the self-same purpose? Why then, Sir, do you not confine yourself to that part of K — that is peculiarly assigned you? And when by haranguing in C —, thro' the spirit of pride and contumacy, you invade the province of your Patron, Benefactor, and Schoolmaster; what Security can you give, that in your Saviour's days, you would have treated those he personally appointed, with more ceremony, attention and respect?

“ Farewell, Sir,——if any of the bold Truths emblazed in these pages, seem harsh, and grating; their intention must divest them of asperity. *Monere volo, non mordere*; and it is the wish of my heart, to awaken you to a sense of those irregularities in your demeanour, that disturb the internal Oeconomy of our diocese. I have done my utmost, and have finished. Henceforward I shall content myself with wishing you may consider this matter, as it deserves; for unless you do, the Transition will be quick and easy from the Parish of your earliest Friend,——one of our best men, and most able Preachers, into any other you may fancy in need of your abilities. And as it will be impossible for any thing I can further advance to have any weight with you, having, (I confess) exhausted myself, I shall only add, in the Poet’s words, *mutatis mutandis*——

“ Si, Mimnermus uti censet, sine amore, jocisque
Nil est jucundum—; vivas in amore, jocisque.”

“ Vive,——valeque.

“ I am Sir, with every good wish for your present and future well-being, your Friend and Brother in the common Lord and Master, and Father of all Mankind.”

C.”

To the foregoing Mr. A. made the following Reply, which was drawn up in a very great hurry on the Day preceding the Triennial Visitation; as he did not receive the Arch-Deacon’s two last Letters before that time.

L E T-

LETTER XV.

“ To the Rev. Archdeacon C.

Aug. 30th, 1781.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ I Am really obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in writing to me ; and am fully persuaded that you were moved so to do from a good intention, and from the *present* view which you have of the matter in debate.—I should be sorry the Cause which you say “ I have undertaken to defend,” namely, the preaching of the Gospel, or doing good to the souls of men according to our power, stood in need of such a poor Defender as what I am.

“ If I was diffuse in my last Letter, it was yours was the cause of it ; wherein you were so “ desultory,” that if one should attempt “ to follow” you, or take any notice at all of each Paragraph of your Letter, he must inevitably be so too, in some degree. It is true, you have arranged your two last Letters into certain Divisions ; but whether you intended these for so many Heads, or distinct Arguments, I cannot say. Indeed I must honestly and plainly tell you, that the whole of your three Letters do not seem to *me* to contain even the Shadow of an Argument, as to the point in hand. The Style and Language being pretty and lively, might perhaps with some pass for Argument, and would therefore tend to “ *mislead*” the Judgment ; but where the point under consideration is, the bidding or forbidding a Minister to preach the Gospel, I think the Language used should be serious and solemn, and the Arguments chiefly deduced from Scripture.

“ 2. What you say concerning *Paul* and *John* in your first Paragraph, is nothing at all to the purpose. I did not “ assimilate” myself to St. *Paul* or to his Eloquence.

I only desired to be permitted, as he was, *to answer for myself*. And as he was permitted thus by a *Roman Governor*, and a *Jewish King*; I thought, whatever my station might be, rating it even at the lowest of any Subject in the *British Dominions*, I might have the same indulgence from a *Protestant Divine*; and this was all the favour I desired; trusting in the goodness of my Cause, and my sincere intention of promoting only the *Glory of God*.

“ 3. Most of the charges which you brought against me in your first Letter, you repeat again, without proving the point in hand. You still arraign me for a breach of my promise at my Ordination to “obey the godly admonitions of my Ordinary, and other chief Ministers.” And to this I still plead—NOT GUILTY. And if you are my Prosecutor, I call upon you to *prove* the Charge. The sum of *your* Admonition, if I can collect it into one sentence, is this;—“Do not pray or expound the Scripture in any place except in the parish of K——.” If all the admonitions of my chief Ministers be similar to this, I dare not obey them; because it is, in effect, forbidding me to do good, and therefore cannot be deemed a *godly admonition*.

“ 4. There is one thing which you mention under your second Division, to which if it is a crime I in part plead—guilty. I have, do, and will frequently use prayers of my own composition; but that I “substitute” them in the place of, or designed thereby to lay aside the Liturgy of our Church, I deny. If it is a crime to use various other prayers besides the Liturgy; then it was culpable in many of the greatest Divines that *England* ever produced; nay it was reprehensible in one of the best Bishops that ever filled the See of K——; I mean the venerable, pious, zealous, renowned Bishop *Bedell*. And again, when I confess that I did pray and expound the word of God on the Hill of K——, and in various other places; yet I did not set aside, or design to “set aside” the Church. My true and real design was to bring to the Church some who were quite indifferent about any Church whatsoever. And I bless God, my labour was not altogether

ther in vain ; as it pleased him, upon those occasions, to make some acquainted with their real state, which they had never known before by all that they had heard formerly in the places vulgarly called Churches, Mass-houses, or Meeting-houses.

“ 5. You are entirely right, Sir, in endeavouring to repress any who come under the description of those Teachers mentioned under your third Head. And wherever I meet with such I shall oppose them to the utmost of my poor abilities ; and I could wish that the Laws of the Land were put into execution against all those that transgress them.

“ 6. There is scarcely any thing in your fourth Division, that I have not in substance taken notice of before. You ask indeed— “Am I uninvited in my own Cure”? To which I answer, it was not necessary to invite me there ; for I go into every House when I please. And when I go by invitation into the House of any man elsewhere, it was not necessary to have the permission of the Minister or any other man. And that man, as I said before, may invite whom he pleases to his House ; and those invited may come or not, there is no compulsion ; and perhaps many may come who were not personally invited. You have spoken to this point under your fifth head ; but you have not yet disproved the legality of it.

“ 7. Tho’ I do still acknowledge the weighty Charge of the care of Souls, whether it be those of K— or any other parish, as vastly above the abilities of me, or perhaps of any other man ; yet I still think that I may be allowed to spend those hours or days of “relaxation or recreation,” which you think “not incompatible with our Profession,” in any manner I please, provided I do not spend them as many do, in idle or trifling diversions, or such diabolical practices as those specified in my Letter. I entirely agree with you, that the “only Pattern by which we should regulate our Lives,” is that of Christ our Lord and Master. We are “to live God-like lives ;” nor are “the innocent enjoyments of Life interdicted ;” only let us be sure that we understand well what are *innocent* and what are not

not. I hope no Protestant Divine will be hardy enough to affirm that Christ or his Apostles practised, or taught the allowableness of such as I have mentioned, which I still look upon as *diabolical*.

“ If there be any thing further in your Letters which I have not yet touched upon, it is owing to my present hurry, and the desire I had to be as concise as possible.

I am, Reverend Sir,
with due respect,
your very humble Servant.
A.

“ P. S.——you seem, Sir, desirous to pursue a “logical method, and a regular chain of disputation.” I am very little skilled in Logic, and I am far from being fond of disputation. But, methinks, the whole matter between us upon this late occasion, is reducible to one single Proposition; namely, (to use your own words) “ the method of spreading Divinity.” If the Divinity be good, (and such you have repeatedly allowed mine to be,) can it be too far spread? If yours and mine be “consentaneous” to the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, would to God it was spread from Shore to Shore; and from Pole to Pole! and for *my* part, I cannot think it right to force a man’s conscience with respect to some little peculiarities in his “manner.” If we agree in the essential points, then let him choose that method which he thinks will prove most effectual to the end which we both aim at. You cannot prove me guilty, Sir, of a crime, from any concessions I have made in my Letters, except you first *prove* that what I have confessed is a crime. Remember, that ten thousand bold assertions, and *ipse dixit*, accompanied with opprobrious names, do not, all together, amount to one single *proof*; neither do they contain the shadow of an argument. As I am endeavouring to do good according to my power, and am not conscious of any guilt in the instance wherein you seem to condemn me; I will, for brevity’s sake, reduce the whole of our difference to this short Argument:

“ A

" *As we have time, (or opportunity) let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* Gal. vi. 10.

" To preach *Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,* is doing good. [Acts xx. 21.]

" Ergo,—Let him that is commissioned of God to preach, do it, (as he *has opportunity*) to all men, both *in season and out of season.*

" Which of the Premises will you deny? Or will you attempt to say—" *Negatur Conclusio?*"

" But here, Sir, let me assure you, that tho' I have used this Argument, I do it only to shew you, that conciseness, not prolixity, is what I chiefly aim at. You say, you "have finished; and confess yourself exhausted." So have I a desire to finish, tho' blessed be God, I am not exhausted. One thing I must inform you of, and then I shall conclude. I mean to preach the Gospel, while God permits, time and opportunity serves, and my health, strength, and voice allow.

" Vive, —valeque."

Sed,—Memento mori. Volat irrevocabile Tempus."

The Arch-Deacon seeing all his heavy Ordnance and grand Battery silenced by one shot which Mr. A. had drawn from the Scripture Arsenal; and all his Ammunition being also exhausted, he endeavours to make the best retreat he can in the following Letter; firing at the same time a few small shot composed of light wit and forced Ridicule, as best suited to one who was retiring from the field of Battle.

LET-

L E T T E R XVI.

“ To the Rev. Mr. A.

“ Rev. Sir,

September 5th, 1781.

“ **W**HEN I confessed myself exhausted, it was only a Quotation. The Original is the Exclamation of a fair, but unfortunate Speculatist. Baffled in her laborious efforts to render a sooty African of her own complexion, she yielded to the predominancy of nature. I adopted the ingenuous acknowledgement, apprehensive of the identical defeat. Whether this must be imputed to some similarity in the attempt, or my own mismanagement, shall be left to our Brethren at the next Visitation. You intrude yourself officiously,—and I now must add impertinently, into several Parishes, and esteem your Authority unlimited. I affirm such conduct to be irregular, uncharitable, and reprehensible ; and maintain that it subjects you to ecclesiastical Censure. You reply that my Assertions do not contain the shadow of an Argument. You go on and accuse me of *ipse dixit*, tho’ I had declined producing any thing from myself, and referred you to Doctor R—. Our epistolary Intercourse shall therefore be submitted to the abovenamed Judges, who being all concerned as much as we are, will attend to and determine upon our difference. I cordially abide by their decision. In the mean time I caution you not to officiate within my Parish without my Permission. If you reject this Countel, rely upon it I shall convince you you have exceeded your commission. I mention this, because of the Information with which you conclude your Letter ; and be so kind to yourself as to esteem it a friendly Admonition.

“ If my Letters do not exhibit a Stile equally throughout serious and solemn, it must be attributed to the impossibility

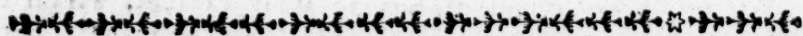
sibility of treating some particulars with gravity. Ridicule has its weight in the opinion of Lord Shaftsbury ; and Horace demands—

“ Ridentem dicere verum quis vetat ? ”

“ But, Sir, it was not your Person, or Character I levelled at. It was at a practice that degrades you. If a Judge will put on a merry Andrew’s Frock, a Lord Chancellor mount the Stage of a Mountebank, or an ordained Minister of the most apostolical Church on Earth, submit to preach in Fields, Conventicles and Session-Houses—; adopting the very cant and manner of the most ignorant, and hypocritical Itinerants.— “ Spectatum admitti, risum teneatis ? ”—But you are incorrigible. Steer clear, however, of K—r in your Peregrinations, and you never shall be molested by your Friend and Brother,

C.”

Upon the receipt of the foregoing Letter, Mr. A. thought it needless to press his Antagonist further; because he seemed to have quitted the field and declined any farther contest. But when he heard a considerable time afterwards, that the Doctor had plumed himself very much, and had read his Letters to several persons, who were of the same Opinion with himself, and whose Judgment, coinciding with his own, served only to raise his vanity ; he took occasion to write to him the following Letter.



L E T T E R X V I I .

“ To the Rev. Arch-Deacon C.

“ Rev. Sir,

Jan. 28th. 1782.

“ **U**PON the Receipt of your last Letter, of the 5th of September, I concluded that it was unnecessary for me to make any further reply ; seeing you had declined

G

declined proceeding upon the Question agitated between us, and took no notice at all of the Argument produced in the Postscript of my last Letter. And as you had said, you would “lay our Letters before our Brethren at the next visitation,” I had resolved to say nothing more about the matter until that time: But, hearing that you have been at great pains in reading those Letters to some persons both of the Clergy and Laity, I beg leave to furnish you with an opportunity of laying the following also before them: And you have my *full* consent, not only to read them to whom you please, but to print the whole of yours and mine, provided you give them to the Public, literally and exactly as they were written. If *you* do not this, perhaps *I* may, and then let every candid reader judge for himself.

“In any matter wherein Conscience is not concerned, I should be ready to consult and pay great deference to the Opinion of my Brethren, or any number of sensible men; but as Conscience is a sacred and hereditary Right, we cannot obey any Governour in Church or State any farther than it dictates. We may be brought to assent to the opinion of others by Argument; but would *you*, Sir, give up your Conscience to any man or number of men upon Earth? The point wherein you reprehend me, is a case of Conscience; and besides, it has not yet been demonstrated to me, that I act in this case contrary to any Law, human or divine.

“There are a few things in your Letters, which I have hitherto passed by, partly because they seemed not to affect the case in point; and partly because I wished to use as few words as possible.

1. “You say—“My practices insult and misrepresent the clergy of this Diocese;” and call upon me to “point out the man amongst them who is remiss in duty, or unworthy of his charge.” To this I reply, that personal Reflexion has nothing to do with the Question agitated between you and me. I am not, nor do I mean to be an accuser of my Brethren. I am accused *myself*, and stand at *your* Bar at present; therefore my only concern
now

now is to defend myself. I would rather "imitate the action of *Shem* and *Japhet*," than discover the nakedness of the Land, if in my power. The Duty of a Clergyman is very awfully and emphatically expressed in the Exhortation given at our Ordination. Any person concerned may read it, study it, and apply it to his own Conscience. It is "sufficient, indeed, to make a thinking man tremble!"

"I rail at no man, Sir; I insult no man; I misrepresent no man.—"But, *Master*, in thus acting, *thou reproachest us*; Your conduct *implies* at least that the Clergy don't do their Duty."—Whatever my conduct or practices may *imply*, I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that the Salvation of immortal Souls, who are *perishing thro' lack of knowledge*, is the sole object which I have in view; without any design to magnify myself before men, or render others contemptible before the People. And when I meet at any time or place with a person or persons who are ignorant of their fallen state, ignorant of *the truth as it is in Jesus*, ignorant of God, and present Salvation, I might well be accounted "uncharitable," if I did not endeavour to instruct them so far as it was in my power, and when it suited my convenience.

"2. You say, Sir, when I spoke publicly at C——. that it was, "thro' a spirit of pride and contumacy, thereby invading the Province of my Patron, Benefactor, and School-master." How can you take upon you to *affirm* this, without invading the province of the Searcher of hearts? I have not, neither shall I forget what I owe that gentleman; nor will it, I am persuaded, appear to any serious man, who weighs the matter in the balance of Scripture and Reason, that in preaching the Gospel, I treated him or any other person with disrespect. I believe I am called both of God and Man; and as I am indebted to the *Father of Light* only for the little knowledge which I have in Divinity, I should be very ungrateful, if I did not *freely* impart to others, what I *freely received* from the bountiful donor. I would beg leave to put this Question:—Were *Paul* and *Timothy* now living, would *Paul* be

offended at his Son *Timothy* for preaching any where in his Province, or even in that house which he hired at *Rome*? *St. Paul* tells us, he rejoiced that *Christ* was preached even by some who did it, not out of love to him, but in order to add affliction to his bonds; how much more would he rejoice to hear of *Timothy's* preaching, or speaking boldly in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*?

“ 3. You seem to think that Christianity is now fully established, when you say, “ the Church is in its glory.” My dear Sir, would it not be worth our while to reflect seriously a little upon the following Queries?—Is Christianity established in the hearts of the tenth part of the Inhabitants of this kingdom; not to extend our view to *China, Madagascar, Japan, Mexico, or Peru*? When you say “ the Church is now in its glory,” pray what Church do you mean? Is it a particular, or the universal Church? Is the particular Church of *Ireland* in its glory? Does every professed member of our Church really “ renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and walk in all the commandments of God all the days of his life?” Are the twentieth part of our Nobility and men of Fortune real Members of our Church? Do they know any thing of the System of Religion contained in our Articles, Homilies, and Prayer-Book; or do they practise according to the common precepts of Christianity? Are not the greater number of them Deists, both in Principle and in practice? If then the unsound Members were culled out, or at least a publick mark set upon them, as upon *Cain*; (“ *ne pars sincera trabatur*”) might not the sound members, when collected together, be called a little flock?—But, Is the universal Church of *Christ* in its glory, even altho’ the Gospel has been promulged in almost every Nation under Heaven? I believe it is very far from being the case; nor will I venture to say it will be in its glory, untill that eminent Prophecy is fulfilled, when righteousness shall spread over the Globe, and the Earth be full of the Knowledge of God as the waters cover the Sea. It is indeed, “ beneath the dignity of our profession to quibble upon this, or any other occasion.” And yet do not many quibble

quibble when they use the Word—*Church* ? Do they not often, by a figure of Rhetoric, apply it to the building where men are assembled to worship God ? Whereas it is defined in one of our Articles to be “ a Congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered.” If then we are employed at any time, or in any place, in turning men from error and wickedness to light and holiness ; we are, properly speaking, bringing them into the Church, not causing them “ to undermine its foundations, or level the fair structure to the ground.”

4. “ I did not doubt Doctor R—’s abilities, as a Civilian ; but I was under no necessity to consult him in what appears to me almost a self-evident Proposition. Any person, who cannot see it in the same light, may consult, if he chuses, all the Civilians and Divines in the *British Dominions*. I have advanced one short Argument upon the Proposition in the Postscript of my last Letter, which still remains unanswered. Let him that would attempt to answer it, produce the Canon of Scripture ; for no other Canon will go down with me except the written Word, or that which is clearly founded upon it. And, however fine-spun his language may be, and interlarded with little scraps of Latin taken from heathen Authors, yet, when it is brought to the Touch-stone, *to the Law and to the Testimony*, it will fall to the ground like a spider’s web. I grant that “ particular places were set apart for the worship of God in all ages ;” but I never heard, till very lately, that the Dedication of such places implied an exclusion of all others. Such an exclusion would carry absurdity upon the very face of it. Our Lord and his Apostles frequently went into the Temple and Synagogues ; but did they confine themselves or their worship to these ? —If then field-preaching, house-preaching, street-preaching ceases to be tolerated in these Nations, it will be when Popery and arbitrary Power are re-established here, and the Bible is locked up in the *Vatican*.

5. “ But is it not ridiculous to see a Minister of the established Church preaching in Fields and Session-houses ?

Does not this practice degrade him?" Yes, if it was ridiculous in his Master to do it, "The only Pattern which he ought to follow."—Let us stop for a moment.—Let us behold JESUS CHRIST preaching to the multitudes on the mountain;—at another time, out of a ship on the Sea-shore; and travelling up and down *Gallilee* exhorting all to repent and believe.—Let us view St. Paul standing in the midst of *Arsopagus*, preaching *Jesus and the Resurrection*. Hear him, when he had sent for the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, relating to them, and reminding them, how he had taught them publicly, and from house to house. View *Jonah* travelling through the extensive City of *Nineveh*, and calling all the inhabitants to Repentance. Let any one that chuses, laugh at these, if he can; but he must first laugh at *them*, before he can with any degree of propriety laugh at *me*, for copying after them, and doing what is strictly enjoined in the written word. Here I beg you may not mistake me as you did before. Imitation does not imply equality. So when I exhibit Christ and his first Apostles as my pattern, which you grant we should all copy after, I don't pretend to be equal to them. And I must again repeat it, since Vice and Immorality abound every where, and since the greater part of men will not vouchsafe to come to the stated places for public Worship; it behoves us to call upon them every where, lest their blood be required at our hands.

"Ridicule undoubtedly has its weight." But, methinks, you have been a little unfortunate, upon this occasion, in the choice of Lord *Shaftsbury* an eminent Deist, and *Horace* the Epicurean; who, were they now living, would, no doubt, laugh at all Religion; nay, if in their power, would laugh the Ministers and Preachers of CHRIST out of the world. The preaching of Christ crucified seemed foolishness to the wise Greeks of old; but God hath made foolish the Wisdom of this World; and it pleases him by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe. Therefore, since it pleases him, I will be yet more vile, if I may by any means save some; and let those, who seem

wise

wife in their own eyes, mock and laugh as much as they please.

“ 6. You still think that I “ exceed my Commission,” and only to indulge or gratify some particular passion. Be assured, Sir, it was with much reluctance I went into Orders at first; it is with the greatest reluctance I still preach; and were I to *confer with flesh and blood*, to consult my own ease, or my natural inclination, I would never preach at all, no, not even in K——. I can truly use St. Paul’s words;—it is *against my will* that a *dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me*; for *necessity is laid upon me*; *yea so is unto me if I preach not the Gospel*. And if I thought that this dispensation implied no more than the Commission which I have received of man, I would not dare to speak in the name of God, as his Ambassador, no, not for all this world can produce. I shudder at the thought of a man’s thrusting himself into this office without being sent of God; better had it been for such a one that he had never been born. To such, God will say, at the great day, “*what badst thou to do to declare my Statutes? you ran, but I sent you not. I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”

“ 7. You mention “ Church-Discipline” some where in your Letters, I think. But, my dear Sir, may I without offence ask, is there any Church-Discipline now observed in the Diocese of K——? If there is, what is become of my late Presentment to the Vicar-General? If it is suppressed, or no notice taken of it, what is the inference? Why, that Adultery, Fornication, and vending Goods on the Sabbath-Day will be tolerated in this Diocese; but a Clergyman, who inveighs against those both in publick and private, will not be tolerated. Nay, Popish missionaries will be permitted freely and without control to “prowl about K———r;” but a minister, whose Doctrines are confessedly “orthodox,” breathe “the genuine Spirit of Christianity” and entirely “con-
sentaneous to the Articles of our Church,” will be prohibited from preaching them there, lest the poor lost sheep should be persuaded to become Christians. I had
almost

almost said — “*Risum . teneatis . amici?*” — But it is rather a lamentable, than a laughable matter! Will not God visit for these things?

“ 8. In the former part of your first Letter I am amazed to find these words dropping from the pen of one who had previously read, “carefully read over,” and then subscribed the *ninth* Article of our Church; nay, at the time of his Induction into the Parish living of K——r, had publickly given his Assent and Consent to *all things* contained in the Book of Common-Prayer. “I am little disposed (you say) to forget what I owe myself, and the Dignity of my nature.” — As to what you owe yourself, I let pass; but I would beg leave to ask, has any man upon earth, has a king, has an Heir apparent to a Crown any Dignity of nature? *David*, king of *Israel*, thought but little of the Dignity of *his* nature, when he said, — *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.* The great Apostle of the Gentiles was of the same mind where he saith, — *we were by nature the children of wrath.* *Job's* friend was conscious of the same thing when he saith, — *man is born like a wild Ass's colt, and drinketh in iniquity like water.* — And our excellent Reformers seem to have had clear notions concerning this matter; for, they have left their opinion upon record that “every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam* is corrupt by nature, inclined to evil, born in sin, and a child of wrath.” “There is no health in us” by nature, there is nothing but *wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.* Nay, man by nature is so very corrupt, and desperately wicked, that the blackness of the picture cannot be represented in more striking colours than it is by the inspired writer, where he saith — *every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is only evil continually.* Oh! tell it not in *Gath*, publish it not in the Streets of *Askelon*, lest the *Philistines* rejoice and triumph; that a Beneficed Clergyman of our Church, who hath publickly subscribed and assented to her Doctrines, should afterwards speak of the “Dignity of his nature”? — The Dignity of nature! — The Dignity of nature!
Alas!

—Alas! Sir, we are all fallen spirits; we are sons of fallen Adam; we are “very far gone from original righteousness;” and if any man says or thinks that he has any Dignity of nature, he denies original sin, and of consequence, the necessity of a Saviour to come and redeem a lost Race.

“9. In a former Letter I granted that none are admitted into the ministry in our Church who do not *profess* their Assent and Belief of her Doctrines; but now I beg leave to ask, do all preach, and continue to preach what they then professed to believe? Do not many ignorantly speak of the Dignity of human nature in their publick Discourses, and in so doing, strike at the very root of Christianity? Is not dry morality now retailed by many Teachers, which can never feed or satiate an immortal soul? Are not the people often exhorted to do what is utterly impossible to such as have not yet believed in Christ? That is, they are desired to raise the Superstructure, before they have laid the foundation. This is not railing, Sir; it is not censuring; it is not accusing any individual. I only propose the Questions; let every man concerned in them answer each to his own Conscience. It is my hearty wish that every minister, who has subscribed and assented to the sound Doctrines of our Church, may continue to preach them, and practise accordingly: And that he may make what he speaks in the Pulpit consonant to what he reads in the Reading-Desk.

“Farewell, Sir; —If any of the bold Truths emblazed in these Pages seem harsh or grating; their intention must divest them of asperity.—*Monere volo, non mordere.*”

“Having informed you once more that I mean to call Sinners to repentance *every where*, when it suits my convenience, and when I am called to it, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Rev. Sir,
your Servant for Christ's sake”

A.

L E T.

The Arch-Deacon never attempted to make any reply to this; and though he had in his last Letter intimated his intention of reading or laying all the Letters which had passed between him and Mr. A. upon this occasion, before the Clergy at the following Visitation; yet he did not venture to do it; neither did he say one word about the matter. Whether he was intimidated by what Mr. A. had said in his last Letter, or whether his mind was now more enlightened to see that he had been guilty of an egregious blunder, in assuming to himself some "dignity of Nature," and therefore began to be ashamed, is best known to himself. It is truly surprising indeed, that he, who had so boldly stepped out from among the Hosts, declaring himself the Champion, and "zealous Advocate of as respectable a Clergy as Christendom can boast," should so soon shrink back, and tamely yield to one, on whom he had lately looked with so much contempt. Yea, though he had breathed out threatnings against Mr. A. if he should attempt to preach in *his* parish; yet, when he *did* do it twice afterwards, at the request of some of the Parishioners, he took no notice of it.

And now, Reader, it is left to thee to pass sentence, or give thy judgment, after thou hast candidly, and without prejudice, summed up the evidence, or the arguments produced by these learned Doctors against the Curate. What crime has he been guilty of? Has he acted contrary to the Laws of the Land, or to the Laws of God? Has he acted uncharitably, illiberally, or without due respect towards his superiors? Is it a crime to call sinners to repentance, at *any* time, or at *any* place? Was it a heinous crime in him to preach in more places than one in that Parish where he was appointed Curate? What dost thou think of the Arch-Deacon's expostulating Letters? "Why, their Style is florid and pretty." Well, but do they contain any conclusive Argument? Or canst thou among all his pompous flourish of Words, make out what he would be at? Perhaps you are ready to reply,—

"Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus."

When

When Mr. A. chose, two years after this, to resign his Curacy, in order to remove elsewhere, he obtained from his Bishop a certificate, relative to his Character and conduct, of which the following is a copy.

****, by divine permission, Lord Bishop of K——

To all whom these Presents may concern.

“ I do hereby certify that the Rev. ^{2^d Freighden} **** A. B. has serv'd as Curate Assistant of the Parish of ^{Kemawly} ~~Kem~~ in our said Diocese of ~~Kem~~, upwards of thirteen Years. His Deportment has been honest, sober, and decent, as I believe, having never had any complaint exhibited against him. Having this day desired to resign his Licence of his said Curacy into my hands:—In Justice to him I cannot with-hold this recommendation of him.

“ In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto affixed my Hand and Seal, this 30th Day of September, in the Year of our Lord, 1783.

***** K——.

(Seal.)

The following is a Copy of the Paper alluded to in the Arch-Deacon's Letter, which was handed by Mr. A. to some of the Clergy at the Visitation; being an Extract from a Charge delivered by the Bishop of *Exeter* to his Clergy.

“ My Brethren,

“ I beg you will rise up with me against *Moral Preaching*. We have long been attempting the Reformation of the Nation by Discourses of this kind. With what success? Why, none at all. On the contrary, we have very dexterously preached the People into down-right

right Infidelity. We must change our voice. We must preach Christ, and him crucified. Nothing but Gospel is, nothing will be found to be the Power of God unto Salvation besides. Let me therefore again and again request, may I not add, Let me charge you to preach JESUS CHRIST, and Salvation through his Name. Preach the Lord who bought us. Preach Redemption through his blood. Preach the Saying of the great High-Priest;—*He who believeth shall be saved.* Preach Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

FINIS,

10 FE 58

The Curate made mention of in these Letters is the Rev. Jas. Creighton Minister of Kinnawly, in the Diocese of Kilmore Ireland.

